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"LAND AND SETTLEMENT IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS (1500-1821): A STUDY IN THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF NORTHWESTERN GUATEMALA."

University — Université
UNIVERSITY of ALBERTA, EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée
Ph.D

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade
1980

Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
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LAND AND SETTLEMENT IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS (1500-1821): A STUDY IN THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF NORTHWESTERN GUATEMALA

by

© WILLIAM GEORGE LOVELL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1980

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Land and Settlement in the Cuchumatán Highlands (1500-1821): A Study in the Historical Geography of Northwestern Guatemala, submitted by William George Lovell in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

For much of the fifteenth century, most of the native peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands of Guatemala were under the political hegemony of the Mexicanised Quiché of Gumarcaah. By 1500 Quiché domination had diminished, and Indian groups in the Cuchumatanes had emerged as small, self-determining nations. Their hard-earned autonomy was not to last for very long. After a five-year period of conquest and subjugation, Spanish military forces had by 1530 established control over the indigenous communities of the Cuchumatán highlands as a minute part of one of the most ambitious imperial designs in the history of mankind.

Largely because of the region's physical isolation and its limited entrepreneurial potential, the Altos Cuchumatanes never aroused the intense interest of the Spanish colonial regime. Economic prospects here were significantly less attractive than elsewhere in Guatemala, and were in no way comparable to those which existed in other better endowed areas of the Hispanic American realm. However, the cultural landscape of the Cuchumatán highlands underwent important changes as a consequence of the Spanish conquest.

Through the policy of congregación, scores of Indian families moved either voluntarily or involuntarily from their old homes in the mountains to new towns and villages built around churches located in open valley floors. By altering the native pattern of settlement from one of dispersion to one of nucleation, congregaciones served the double function of facilitating the conversion of the Indians to Christianity and creating centralised pools of labour which the Spaniards, through institutions such as the encomienda, the tasación de tributos, and the repartimiento, exploited in a variety of ways. Because Spanish conquerors and colonists were more entrepreneurially than feudally inclined, control of labour was initially of greater importance than control of land. It was not until the exploitation of Indian labour proved to be an unreliable source of wealth that materially-minded Spaniards turned to the land as an alternative means of support. Spanish acquisition of land in the Cuchumatanes coincided closely with a period of economic depression in Central America lasting roughly from 1635 to 1720. One of the principal factors behind the seventeenth-century depression and the taking up of land on the part of Spaniards was a depleted native work force which had declined drastically in size since the early sixteenth century. Between 1520 and 1670, Indian numbers in the Cuchumatán highlands fell sharply as a result of the introduction by the European invaders of Old World diseases to an immunologically defenseless native population. The demographic collapse of the Cuchumatán population, a drop of more than 90 per cent over a period of 150 years, was as catastrophic as the extremity and rapidity of aboriginal depopulation in other long settled regions of Hispanic America. In the devastating impact of Old World diseases on the physiologically vulnerable inhabitants of the New World lies a major explanation of the frustration and eventual disintegration of Spanish imperial desires.

PREFACE

Early on the morning of June 25, 1974, I left the Mexican town of San Cristóbal de las Casas and travelled south, for the first time, towards Guatemala. Having completed the field research for my Master's thesis on sixteenth-century Mexico, I planned merely to spend a few restful days in Guatemala before starting the long overland trip back to Canada. I stayed for nearly three weeks, totally captivated by the beauty and richness of all that was there.

Almost immediately after crossing the Guatemalan border at La Mesilla, I was struck by the splendour of the country through which I was travelling. Though rugged and broken, the landscape was lush and green, a pleasant change after the stark aridity of much of highland Mexico. The earth here seemed somehow more fruitful. Villages looked cleaner, and the cornfields rising up the steep mountain slopes better cared for. The Indians, so conspicuous an element of the human population, were certainly more colourful, and although most lived a life of brutal and abject poverty yet they retained a sense of dignity and worth. I felt myself being carried off into a world where everything was new and where something special was waiting. As the bus rolled on down the Selegua valley, the countryside became more beautiful by the mile. Daylight eventually grew dim behind the distant ranges of the Cuchumatán mountains. Night fell and I began to wonder. By the time I got off the bus in Huehuetenango I had made up my mind. If ever the opportunity presented itself, I would choose this area as a focus for doctoral research. These are the subjective, phenomenological origins of this dissertation.

Three years later, after a period of fairly intensive reading and a more academic formulation of ideas, my investigations began. Research possibilities in the geography of the Cuchumatán highlands of Guatemala proved to be endless, but I opted for the task of reconstructing what happened to the land and the people under Spanish colonial rule. This orientation necessitated long hours pouring over the profuse archival documentation. During 1977 and 1978 I had three lengthy sojourns gathering material in the Archivo General de Centroamérica, Guatemala City, and in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain. Work in these archives was exhausting yet exhilarating. It could have gone on forever, but I brought it to an arbitrary close on May 5, 1978. I then went on a walking tour through the remote parts of the Cuchumatanes I had never visited before. In September 1978 I began writing, finishing my first draft fifteen months later.

The archival and field research upon which the dissertation is based was made possible by the financial support of the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Fund for Advanced Studies. The freedom and flexibility which accompanied my award from this source will always be appreciated.

The staff of the archives in both Guatemala City and Seville were patient and helpful in guiding me through the customary growing pains of how to locate and request the necessary documents. After my sweep through the archives, the work of many scholars provided a crucial framework for interpreting the Cuchumatán data, but it is important to single out the publications of the Berkeley School and the magnificent contribution of Murdo MacLeod. At various stages in writing the dissertation, I have benefited from the constructive criticism of professors John Bergmann, Olive Dickason, Ruth Gruhn, and David Johnson. I am indebted to Helen Phelan, Margaret Sommerville, and George Innes for their services in typing, cartography, and photo-reproduction respectively. To all the people in Guatemala who at one time or another came to my assistance in a myriad of ways, I express my sincere appreciation. I thank Joan for her companionship and support. Finally, I would like to mention my mother and father, whose encouragement and sacrifice, at a critical early age, lie at the root of my interest in learning.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGCA	Archivo General de Centroamérica, Guatemala City. The letter A, placed after AGCA, denotes a document relating to the colonial period (1524-1821). The letter B, placed after AGCA, denotes a document relating to the post-independence period; that is, after 1821. In all citations from this archive the abbreviation "leg." refers to *legajo* and the abbreviation "exp." refers to *expediente*.
AGI:AG	Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain. The letters AG refer to the section of documents extant for the jurisdiction known during colonial times as the *Audiencia de Guatemala*. Some work was also done in the sections denoted *Patronato* and *Justicia*.

And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only
   when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you
   figured
And is altered in fulfilment.

T.S. Eliot, _Little Gidding_.

INTRODUCTION

> Geography and history fill up the entire circumference of our perceptions: geography that of space, history that of time.
>
> I. Kant

> It is impossible to disassociate geography and history; the landscape is made up of their synthesis. Nature gives us the frame, but men, even in their most humble manifestations, are caught up in the currents of history. Almost always the present can be explained only by the past. It is by the integration of history into geography that one attains the very soul of a country.
>
> Jean Sermet

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past ....

What might have been, and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present ....

And the way up is the way down,
The way forward is the way back ....

T.S. Eliot (from Burnt Norton
and The Dry Salvages, the first
and third of Four Quartets).

The Historical Perspective in Geography

Geography, the study of place and space, of land-life relationships, is a diverse field of learning. Because of the discipline's expansive scope, geographers are seldom in agreement about what constitutes the principal focus of geographical inquiry. The diversity of geography is both the discipline's weakness and its greatest strength, for diversity may breed division and dissent while simultaneously promoting at least the possibility of exposure to a broader, more eclectic range of knowledge.

Within geography there has been frequent debate as to whether or not there is a place in the discipline for historical, genetic, or temporal modes of explanation.[1] Neglect or rejection of the time-dimension, and comment concerning its alleged insignificance in geographical explanation, have been most characteristic of geographers whose studies emphasise "spatial relationships" and who argue that geography should focus predominantly on contemporary distributions and interrelationships. This anti-genetic viewpoint is perhaps best summarised by the words of Richard Hartshorne. In his methodological appraisal, The Nature of Geography, Hartshorne in 1939 noted that "some geographers insist that in order to maintain the essential point of view of geography--the consideration of phenomena in their spatial relations--any consideration of time relations must be secondary and merely supplementary".[2] Hartshorne was himself of the opinion "that while the interpretation of individual features in the geography of a region will often require the student to reach back into the geography of past periods, it is not necessary that the geography of a region be studied in terms of historical development".[3] Before and since the influence of Hartshorne there has persisted a body of opinion in geography which holds that while temporal considerations may not be entirely irrelevant to the study of geography, they are, however, of lesser significance than the primary concern of geography with present-day distributions and interrelationships.

The view of geography as primarily the analysis of contemporary spatial relationships has not gone unchallenged. The year following the publication of Hartshorne's The Nature of Geography, Carl Sauer, in his presidential address delivered to the Association of American Geographers, asserted the view that "geography, in any of its branches, must be a genetic science; that is, must account for origins and processes".[4] Criticising Hartshorne for misinterpreting the views of the German geographer Alfred Hettner, Sauer continued:

> The geographer cannot study houses and towns, fields and factories, as to their where and why without asking himself about their origins. He cannot treat the localization of activities without knowing the functioning of the culture, the process of living together of the group; and he cannot do this except by historical reconstruction. If the object is to define and understand human associations as areal growths, we must find out how they ... came to be what they are .... The quality of understanding sought is that of analysis of origins and processes. The all-inclusive objective is spatial differentiation of culture. Dealing with man and being genetic in its analysis, the subject is of necessity concerned with sequences in time.[5]

Since the 1940 presidential address, which was regarded by Sauer himself as "a confession of the faith that has stood behind one's work",[6] academic support within geography in favour of the necessity and significance of the historical perspective has grown considerably. From a highly general point of view, Darby in 1953 claimed that "all geography is historical geography, either actual or potential".[7] Other papers by Clark in 1954,[8] Smith in 1965,[9] and Harvey in 1967[10] all argued convincingly for the need to have historical forms of explanation incorporated as a fundamental strategy in geographical inquiry. In 1969, Baker, Butlin, Phillips, and Prince stressed the "utility of historical geography" by emphatically stating that "the geographical mosaic can only be fully understood with reference to the past",[11] a way of thinking about geography long upheld and advocated by Sauer.

In retrospect, it is perhaps most fruitful to view the debate concerning the relevance of the historical perspective in geography by considering the position adopted by David Harvey in his Explanation in Geography. After outlining the controversy from both conflicting points of view and noting the "emotional rather than rational reactions" of the personalities involved, Harvey concludes that "temporal modes of explanation (usually called genetic or historical explanations in geography) are important in geography and provide a useful but not exclusive mode of approach, given objectives appropriate for such modes".[12] Thus, depending on the nature of the problem, a historical perspective may or may not be a suitable approach to problem resolution. "No one thing can explain everything: though everything can illuminate something", writes novelist Lawrence Durrell.[13] Historical philosopher Patrick Gardiner observes that "the world is one: the ways we use to talk about it, various".[14] The backward look of historical geography, therefore, is no more than one of several possible ways of looking at the world in an attempt to interpret and understand land-life relationships as they have unfolded and continue to unfold around us.

The Nature of Historical Geography

Historical geography, which may be essentially regarded as the reconstruction of past geographies and the study of processes of geographical change through time, occupies a rather peripheral position within the discipline of geography as a whole. Sauer in 1925 referred to historical geography as a "difficult and little-touched field".[15] Fifteen years later, as President of the American Association of Geographers, he was still protesting against the "neglect of historical geography".[16] Although these early statements have to be appreciated within certain relevant contexts--the first as part of a viewpoint which did much to diminish the constraining influence of environmental determinism on American geography, the second as a response to, and refutation of, the deliberations of Hartshorne--Sauer's observations are today neither inappropriate nor out of date.

Despite the prodigious scholarly achievements of Sauer himself,[17] and the academic activity of such distinguished practitioners as H.C. Darby, Peter Gerhard, James J. Parsons, and Clifford T. Smith, historical geography over the years has remained on the periphery of the discipline. In the eyes of one outside observer, anthropologist Robert Carmack, this situation may simply reflect increasing specialisation within geography and the predominant concern of most branches of the discipline with "current national socioeconomic problems".[18] Alternately, according to the thesis of the Canadian geographer Cole Harris, it may stem from preoccupation with the present "ecological crisis" and emphasis within geographical teaching in the present day on technique, method, and the cultivation of theory over ideas.[19] Compared with recent developments in most other branches of the discipline, historical geography has been little touched by the positivist thinking and drive towards quantification which characterised the 1960s and early 1970s, and has thus been spared many of the disruptive excesses experienced in other geographical quarters more exposed to, and influenced by, the "quantitative revolution".

This is not to say that there is no place in historical geography for quantitative analysis. Alan Baker, in a collection of papers dealing with progress in historical geography, points out that the research of many historical geographers involves familiarity with quantitative techniques; he also notes that historical geographers are turning quite explicitly towards behavioural, perceptual, and theoretical considerations for methodological inspiration.[20] Historical geography over the past two decades, however, has remained to a considerable degree within a traditional framework of qualitative explanation in the face of an increasing quantification of most other branches of geography.

Historical Geography and the Cultural Landscape

Central to the study of historical geography is the concept of the cultural landscape. Sauer held that "historical geography may be considered as the series of changes which cultural landscapes have undergone" and saw the study of historical geography as involving "the reconstruction of past cultural landscapes".[21] Sauer further contended that "geography is based on the reality of the union of physical and cultural elements of the landscape", the term "landscape" being "the unit concept of geography" which must be perceived "as having an organic quality".[22] According to Sauer, cultural landscapes are shaped from natural landscapes by culture groups in a continuous and mutable process:

> Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases and probably reaching ultimately the end of its cycle of development. With the introduction of a different--that is, an alien--culture, a rejuvenation of the cultural landscape sets in, or a new landscape is superimposed on remnants of an older one.[23]

The cultural landscape, in which the activity of man is given both formal and informal expression, is therefore essentially dynamic in nature and must be viewed in the dimension of time. Sauer claims: "We cannot form the idea of landscape except in terms of its time relations as well as of its space relations".[24] Aspects of time--evolution, change, continuity, sequence or succession--are important considerations in the contemplation of the cultural landscape and are the substance of historical geography.

Historical Geography and Geographical Synthesis

A major feature of historical geography over recent years has been its retention of what Cole Harris has termed "geographical synthesis", an approach to the study of geography characterised by personal, empirical judgement, an interest not so much in parts as in wholes, and a general philosophical inclination towards a spirit of intellectual flexibility. Geographical synthesis, maintains Harris, with its emphasis on ideas and individual eclecticism, was formerly one of geography's strongest traditions. This synthesising tradition, Harris contends, has declined steadily in importance since the late 1950s because of an increasing commitment within geographical teaching to technique and theory. The decline of geographical synthesis is lamented by Harris, but he notes with approval its continued employment as a fruitful means of inquiry by historical geographers and calls for its re-establishment throughout the discipline:

> Over the last fifteen years synthesis in North American geography has been largely the work of historical geographers. Some of their studies have been done in fear of new techniques, and some are not very good, but the best of them have been the work of men who recognised the scope and importance of geographical synthesis .... In geographical synthesis, the limits of interests and understanding usually are set not by the nature of the subject but by the competence of the scholar .... Our understanding must rely on our judgement, and if we cultivate theory before judgement we commit ourselves all too often to the endless consideration of method or the meticulous analysis of trivia .... Too often in geography, scholarly competence has been low and studies unexciting, but the task of geographical synthesis is now more important than ever .... One might expect geography to be moving to the centre of the modern university and some of its most vital debate. That this has not happened reflects the fact that our students are steeped in methods rather than in the ideas that can stem from wide-ranging knowledge, while their teachers seek out spatial relations that are often as unimportant as they are irrelevant to the distinctive task of geography. In insisting too much on general theory we cut ourselves off from synthesis and its particular habits of mind.[25]

One important "habit of mind" encouraged by geographical synthesis is the ability to construct a loose research framework around a particular problem rather than confront that problem with a formal, rigid technique and force a partial analysis from unmanageable or missing data. This ability is especially crucial in historical geography in view of the various difficulties associated with the availability of source materials. The dearth or complete absence of consistent, representative data and the chance nature of document survival through the ages, together with difficulties in the analysis and interpretation of information, frequently impose very finite limitations on the work of hsitorical geographers. As Baker has observed: "In practice, the study of historical geography is bedevilled by topical, spatial, and temporal lacunae in the surviving sources", and consequently, "no study in historical geography can be better than the surviving sources will allow".[26] Or in the words of Clayton and Elkins: "The record of the past is sporadic, the survival of information often haphazard".[27] Studies in historical geography may, therefore, be ultimately "data-bound". In such instances, fruitful research is perhaps best conducted with as flexible an approach as possible.

Historical Geography and the Practice of Science

In addition to the retention of a rewarding synthesising tradition, the best writers of historical geography tend to be intellectually wary of the assertion that "science", or "the scientific method", entails detached, impartial, or objective observation. Anne Buttimer has condemned the notion that modern geographical research and teaching is "value-free" and contends that any individual's conception of geography "cannot be considered a separate domain of one's life but is influenced by many personal, cultural, and political 'values' surrounding that work".[28] The myth of science as absolute and objective truth, as an unprejudiced approach to the advancement of learning, may slowly be dawning on the academic world. It is now not only widely recognised that many "scientific" constructs are founded upon intuitive faith but it is also apparent that "scientists", no matter how remote, impersonal, or Olympian they may believe themselves to be, are--like everyone--influenced to a greater or lesser degree by the sort of things they study or come in contact with.[29] Harvey comments: "At some stage or other explanatory form has to be brought into contact with experience".[30] Values, therefore, cannot ultimately be divorced from facts.[31] Thus a productive future strategy in the pursuit of knowledge may possibly be, as Harvey has advocated, not the "scientisation" of social science, but the "socialisation" of natural science.[32] Or, if Harvey's deliberations seem unacceptable, at least the fostering of a more humanistic persuasion in all fields of learning, such as the one favoured for geography by Yi-Fu Tuan.[33]

In contrast to other branches of the discipline, historical geography has tended to operate within Sauer's broad definition of "science" as simply "an organised process of acquiring knowledge".[34] Rather than commit their studies to a mythical objectivity, historical geographers have more often elected for the goal of balanced and imaginative scholarship based largely on experience and personal interests. Historical geographers, therefore, glean inspiration and information from any source which contributes towards an understanding of place or helps more fully to explain why man behaves as he does at a particular place. A view of science not rigid but flexible, not definitive but conditional, not absolute but relative is the view of science implicit in the work of most historical geographers. Such a view of science recognises, as Goethe did, that there are things "accessible and inaccessible" to human knowledge,[35] and that there is a valid and important non-material dimension of reality which may not yield to formal, conventional frames of investigation. The words of Sauer are again appropriate:

> A good deal of the meaning of area lies beyond scientific regimentation. The best geography has never disregarded the esthetic qualities of landscape, to which we know no approach other than the subjective. Humboldt's "physiognomy", Banse's "soul", Volz's "rhythm", Gradmann's "harmony" of landscape, all lie beyond science. These writers seem to have discovered a symphonic quality in the contemplation of the areal scene, proceeding from a full novitiate in scientific studies and yet apart therefrom. To some, whatever is mystical is an abomination. Yet it is significant that there are others, and among them some of the best, who believe, that having observed widely and charted diligently, there yet remains a quality of understanding at a higher plane that may not be reduced to formal process.[36]

Writing more than fifty years ago, Sauer seems here to be verging on a phenomenological view of reality only recently in vogue in mainstream geographical thinking, and expresses an eloquent recognition of the existence of "the spirit of place" worthy of Lawrence Durrell.[37] The important point, however, is that this distinguished historical geographer was aware of a plane of reference, a level of understanding "beyond science" in the strictest sense of the word.

With the world and humankind today confronted with problems of an apparently plethoric nature, with the subjective quality of human existence threatened in every corner of the globe, it may seem myopic to some, even perverse to others, for a branch of geography to concern itself with the study and reconstruction of the past. Before the present qualitative condition of mankind can be improved, however, we must at least attempt to understand how and why things came to be what they are. Furthermore, the past, the present, and the future must not be viewed as independent temporal realms but, rather, must be seen as stages in a dialectical continuum. In the words of Sauer:

> Retrospect and prospect are different ends of the same sequence. Today is therefore but a point on a line, the development of which may be reconstructed from its beginning and the projection of which may be undertaken into the future .... Knowledge of human processes is attainable only if the current situation is comprehended as a moving point, one moment in an action that has beginning and end.[38]

Sauer's perspective here approaches the meditations of poet T.S. Eliot:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past ....[39]

It also moves, as Harvey notes, towards "embracing a philosophy of Being and Becoming worthy of Bergson and Heraclitus",[40] and parallels directly at least one aspect of the Marxist dialectic.[41] But more important than the establishment of a common point of view is the assertion of the relevance, justification, and ultimate necessity of historical modes of explanation in geography. Only by knowing about the past can we understand the present and influence the shape of the future.

Historical Geography in a Middle American Context

In terms of regional focus, the cultural realm known as Middle America--Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies--has attracted significant attention from historical geographers. Of singular merit and importance are the contributions of Carl Sauer, which span a long and fruitful period of more than forty years.[42] Other historical geographers involved in the study of Middle America over the years include J.P. Augelli, J.F. Bergmann, D. Brand, D. Lowenthal, F.W. McBryde, J.J. Parsons, D. Stanislawski, and R.C. West.[43] Studies in the historical geography of Middle America, in conjunction with the work of anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians, therefore indicate a healthy academic interest in the field of Middle American research. In spite of this, however, a number of outstanding research needs still exist. In particular, there are lacunae in our knowledge and understanding of events and processes in certain areas during certain periods of time. This is especially the case with respect to parts of highland Guatemala from the time of initial Indian-Spanish contact in the early sixteenth century until the end of Spanish colonial rule in Central America in 1821.

More than thirty years ago, a group of archaeologists suggested that what was conspicuously lacking in studies of highland Guatemala were historical reconstructions of contact and early colonial culture.[44] This same view has more recently been expressed by the anthropologist H.B. Nicholson who maintains that the research frontier in Middle American studies may be significantly advanced by undertaking "reconstructive syntheses" of, among other areas, parts of highland Guatemala during late pre-Hispanic and early colonial times:

> In spite of some excellent syntheses of the history and culture of certain Mesoamerican linguistic groups ... there are other important groups which lack adequate coverage. A partial list would include: trans-Michoacan West Mexico; Central Mexican Nahua speakers; Huaxtec; Zapotec; the Chiapas groups; the highland Guatemala groups other than the Pocomam, especially Quiché, Cakchiquel, Tzutuhil, Mam and some of the Alta Verapaz peoples .... For some of these groups the available data is thin, but for others they are relatively abundant. In any case, all extant information should be systematically compiled for each, to produce the fullest ethnohistoric reconstruction possible.[45]

The need for historical reconstructions of parts of highland Guatemala is perhaps strongest expressed by anthropologist Robert Carmack who is of the firm conviction that "highland Guatemala is a region particularly rich in documentary source materials, and abjectly poor in bibliographic organization and reconstructive syntheses".[46] One part of highland Guatemala in need of such reconstructive synthesis is the remote northwestern area known as the Altos Cuchumatanes, or Cuchumatán Highlands. The contact and colonial experience of this region has hitherto been largely unknown or speculative. The objective of the dissertation which follows is to reconstruct aspects of the historical geography of the Cuchumatanes from late pre-Hispanic times until the end of Spanish colonial rule in Central America. The dissertation focuses specifically on the changing nature of land-life relationships and on the evolution of the Cuchumatán cultural landscape. The ultimate goal of the dissertation is to portray, as comprehensively as available sources permit, the major land-related features of the historical geography of this isolated upland region between the years 1500 and 1821.

INTRODUCTION: NOTES

[1] D. Harvey, Explanation in Geography, (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), p. 407.

[2] R. Hartshorne, The Nature of Geography, (Lancaster, Pa.: Association of American Geographers, 1939), p. 183.

[3] Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 183.

[4] C. Sauer, "Foreword to Historical Geography", in J. Leighly (ed.), Land and Life: A Selection from the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 352. Sauer's presidential address was first delivered to the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, December 1940. The address was later published in the Annals of the Association of American Geographers (A.A.A.G.), Vol. 31, 1941, pp. 1-24.

[5] Sauer, "Foreword", op. cit., p. 360.

[6] Sauer, "Foreword", op. cit., p. 351.

[7] H.C. Darby, "On the Relations of Geography and History", Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, (19), 1953, p. 6.

[8] A.H. Clark, "Historical Geography", in P.E. James and C.F. Jones (eds.), American Geography: Inventory and Prospect, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1954), pp. 70-105.

[9] C.T. Smith, "Historical Geography: Current Trends and Prospects", in R.J. Chorley and P. Haggett (eds.), Frontiers in Geographical Teaching, (London: Methuen, 1965) pp. 118-143.

[10] D. Harvey, "Models of the Evolution of Spatial Patterns in Human Geography", in R.J. Chorley and P. Haggett (eds.), Models in Geography, (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 549-608.

[11] A.R.H. Baker, et al., "The Future of the Past", Area, No. 1, (4), 1969, p. 48.

[12] Harvey, "Explanation", op. cit., pp. 414 and 418-419.

[13] L. Durrell, Justine, (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 140.

[14] P. Gardiner, The Nature of Historical Explanation, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 61.

[15] C. Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape", in J. Leighly, op. cit., footnote No. 4, p. 344. This paper was first published in 1925 and reprinted in 1938 in Vol. 2, (No. 2), pp. 19-54, of the University of California Publications in Geography.

[16] Sauer, "Foreword", op. cit., p. 351.

[17] For a concise review of Sauer's life and work as a geographer, see J. Leighly, "Carl Ortwin Sauer, 1889-1975", A.A.A.G., Vol. 66, No. 3, September 1976, pp. 345-348.

[18] R.M. Carmack, Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Sources, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 223.

[19] C. Harris, "Theory and Synthesis in Historical Geography", Canadian Geographer; XV, 3, 1971, pp. 157-172.

[20] A.R.H. Baker, Progress in Historical Geography, (Newton Abbot: David & Charles Ltd., 1972), pp. 106-110.

[21] Sauer, "Morphology", op. cit., p. 344.

[22] Sauer, "Morphology", op. cit., pp. 325, 321, 322.

[23] Sauer, "Morphology", op. cit., p. 343.

[24] Sauer, "Morphology", op. cit., p. 333.

[25] Harris, op. cit., p. 170.

[26] A.R.H. Baker, Historical Geography and Geographical Change, (London: MacMillan Education Ltd., 1975), pp. 10-11.

[27] K. Clayton and T.H. Elkins, Preface to Baker (1975), op. cit., p. V.

[28] A. Buttimer, Values in Geography, Association of American Geographers: Resource Paper, No. 24, 1974, p. 5.

[29] A fascinating argument which expounds the view of science as non-objective is contained in The Cult of the Fact, (London: Longmans, 1972), one of psychologist Liam Hudson's most personal and powerful statements.

[30] Harvey, "Explanation", op. cit., p. 10.

[31] M. Billinge, "In Search of Negativism: Phenomenology and Historical Geography", Journal of Historical Geography, 3: 1, (1977), p. 58.

[32] D. Harvey, Social Justice and the City, (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 128.

[33] Yi-Fu Tuan, "Humanistic Geography", A.A.A.G., Vol. 66, No. 2, June 1976, pp. 266-276.

[34] Sauer, "Morphology", op. cit., pp. 315-316.

[35] Goethes sämtliche Werke, Jubiläumsausgabe, Vol. 39, Stuttgart and Berlin [1902], p. 72, quoted in Sauer "Morphology", op. cit., p. 327.

[36] Sauer, "Morphology", op. cit., pp. 344-345.

[37] Two major features of the writing of Lawrence Durrell are his fine sensitivity to landscape and his remarkable ability to render the unique and essential "feel" of various places. In many of Durrell's books landscape looms as large as the human characters themselves. Much of his writing, of which The Alexandria Quartet is a prime example, expounds Durrell's rather deterministic thesis that "man is only an extension of the spirit of place".

[38] Sauer, "Foreword", op. cit., pp. 360-361.

[39] T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, (London: Faber and Faber, 1955), p. 7. An analysis of this particular passage is contained in the study by Constance de Masirevich, On the Four Quartets of T.S. Eliot (London: Vincent Stuart, 1965), p. 14:

> Not only are past and future co-existent with the present: equally existent in some unknown mode are the non-actualised possibilities of each moment. These possibilities the poet has introduced into his scheme of time .... The idea of co-existent time as a pattern in higher

> space implies that our consciousness moves through this pattern as a traveller, arriving and departing with each moment. The yesterday exists, as the city we left yesterday does exist. The morrow exists, as several possible goals exist for our tomorrow. Nothing is excluded. All is. The actualised and the non-actualised both exist.

Thomas Stearns Eliot and Carl Ortwin Sauer have more in common other than the fact that they were both born within a year of each other of immigrant families in Missouri during the late nineteenth century.

[40] Harvey, "Explanation", op. cit., p. 413.

[41] Much of Sauer's work in historical geography reflects a consciousness of what Marx and Engels identified as the " dialectical process" . This is not to say that Sauer was a Marxist, merely that part of his geographical thinking was dialectically structured.

[42] See footnote 17.

[43] For a concise treatment of the work of these writers, see R.C. West and J.P. Augelli, Middle America - Its Lands and Peoples, 2nd edition, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1976). The concluding sections of each chapter contain selected references to the research of the aforementioned historical geographers.

[44] A.V. Kidder, et al., Excavations at Kaminaljuyú, Guatemala, (Washington: Carnegie Institute of Washington, Pub. 561, 1946), pp. 259-260.

[45] H.B. Nicholson, "Middle American Ethnohistory: An Overview", Handbook of Middle American Indians, Vol. 15, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), p. 498.

[46] Carmack, op. cit., p. 5.

PART ONE

THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS OF GUATEMALA: A GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

CHAPTER ONE

THE REGIONAL SETTING

A LOS CUCHUMATANES

Oh cielo de mi Patria!
Oh caros horizontes!
Oh azules altos montes,
Oidme desde allí!
La alma mía os saluda,
Cumbres de la alta Sierra,
Murallas de esta tierra
Donde la luz yo ví!

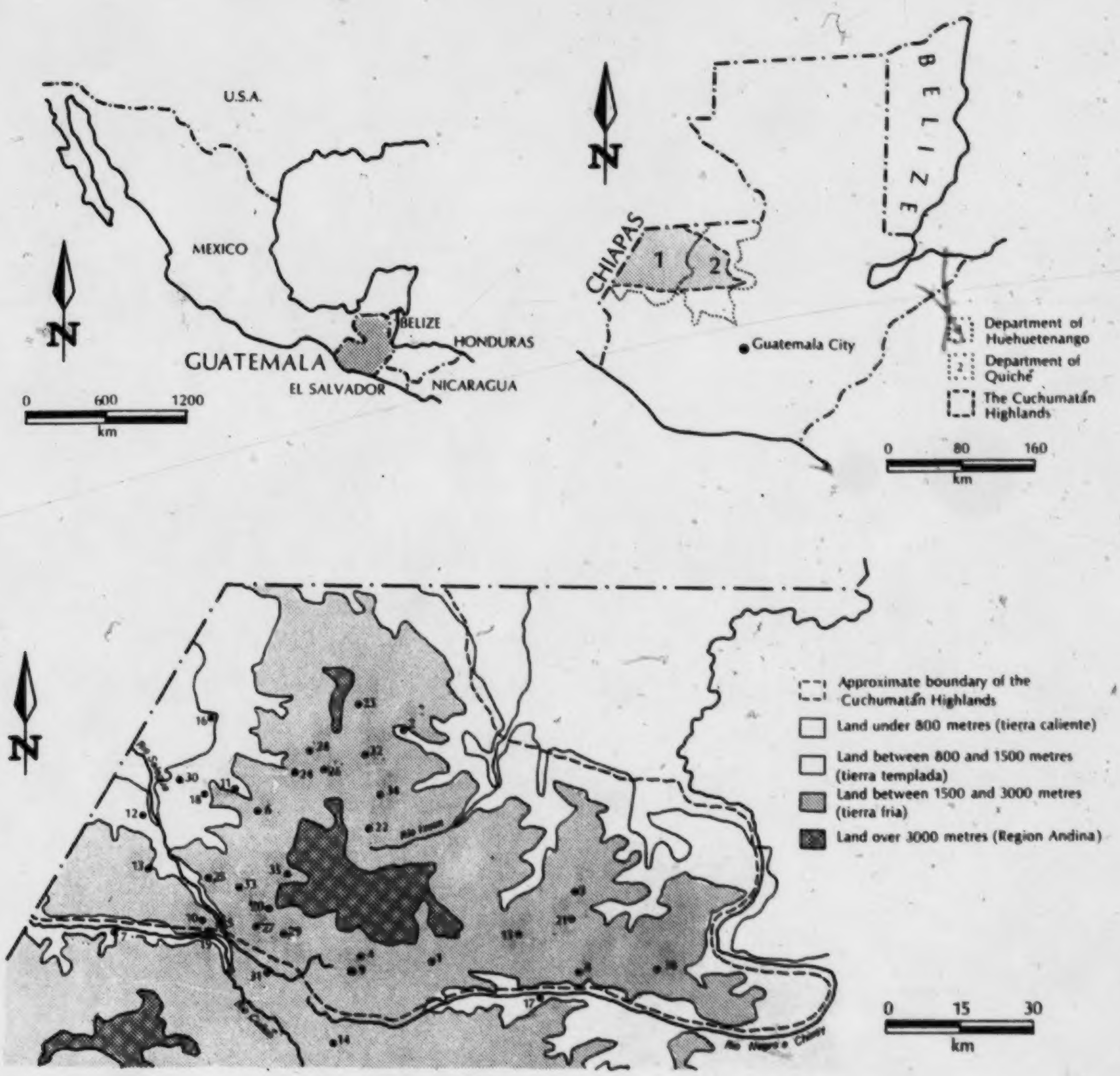
Juan Diéguez

Introduction

The Cuchumatán highlands of Guatemala are the most massive and spectacular non-volcanic region of all Central America. Lying to the north of the Río Cuilco, and to the north and west of the Río Negro or Chixoy, the Cuchumatanes form a fairly well-defined physical unit bordered on the north by the sparsely settled tropical lowlands of the Usumacinta basin and to the west by the Mexican state of Chiapas. The Cuchumatanes, with elevations ranging from 500 to more than 3,600 metres, are contained within the Guatemalan departments of Huehuetenango and Quiché and comprise some 15 per cent (approximately 16,350 square kilometres) of the national territory of the Central American republic (see Map 1).

MAP 1

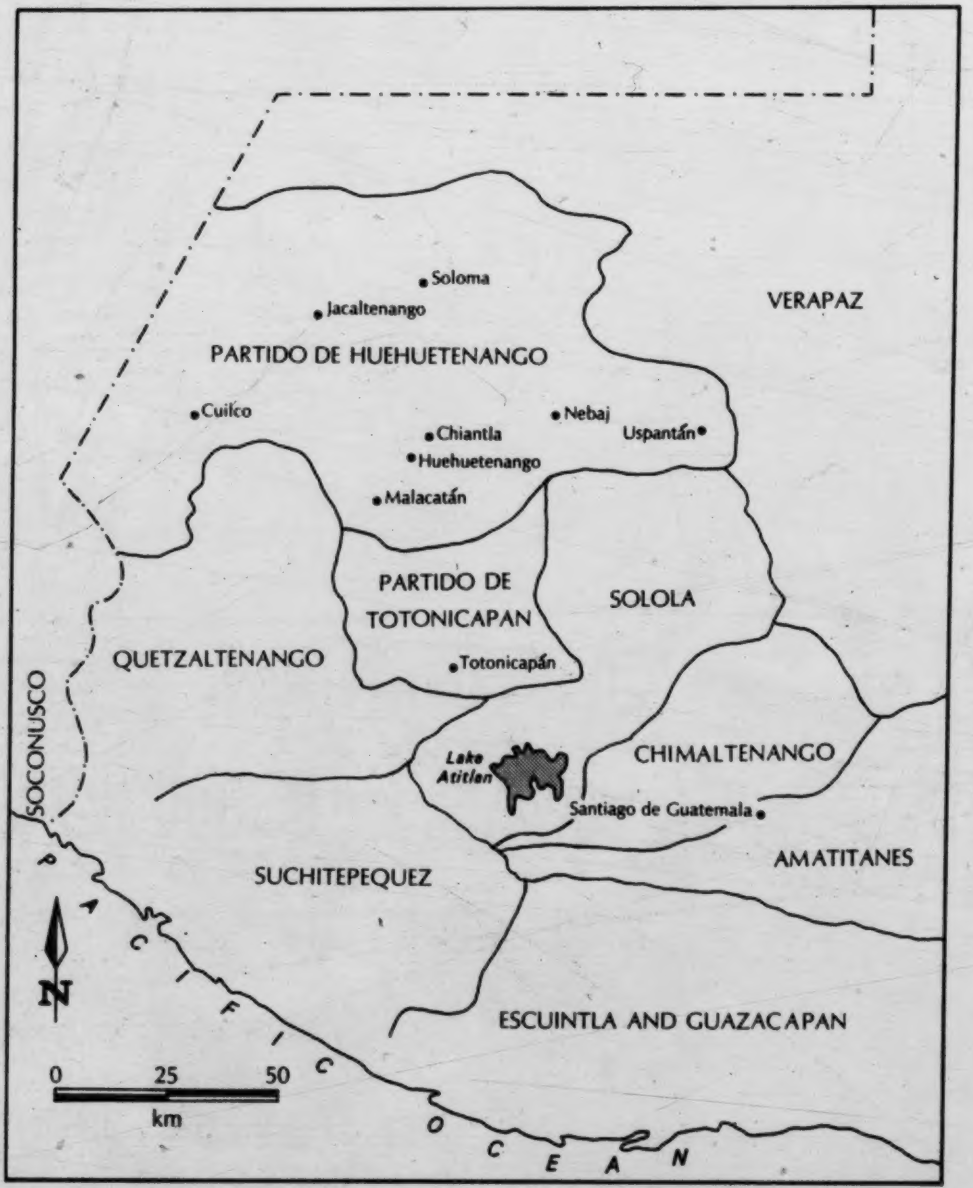
THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS, GUATEMALA: THE INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING


U.S.A.
MEXICO
N
BELIZE
HONDURAS
GUATEMALA
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
0 600 1200
km
N
CHIAPAS
1
2
BELIZE
Guatemala City
Department of Huehuetenango
Department of Quiché
The Cuchumatán Highlands
0 80 160
km
N
Approximate boundary of the Cuchumatán Highlands
Land under 800 metres (tierra caliente)
Land between 800 and 1500 metres (tierra templada)
Land between 1500 and 3000 metres (tierra fria)
Land over 3000 metres (Region Andina)
Río Negro o Chixoy
0 15 30
km

1. Aguacatán
2. Barillas
3. Chajul
4. Chiantla
5. Colotenango
6. Concepción
7. Cuilco
8. Cunén
9. Huehuetenango
10. Ixtahuacán
11. Jacaltenango
12. La Democracia
13. La Libertad
14. Malacatancito
15. Nebaj
16. Nentón
17. Sacapulas
18. San Antonio Huista
19. San Gaspar Ixchil
20. San Juan Atitán
21. San Juan Cotzal
22. San Juan Ixcoy
23. San Mateo Ixtatán
24. San Miguel Acatán
25. San Pedro Necta
26. San Rafael Independencia
27. San Rafael Petzal
28. San Sebastian Coatán
29. San Sebastián Huehuetenango
30. Santa Ana Huista
31. Santa Barbara
32. Santa Eulalia
33. Santiago Chimaltenango
34. Soloma
35. Todos Santos
36. Uspantán

During the first two centuries of Spanish rule in Guatemala, the Cuchumatán country was part of the administrative division known as the corregimiento or alcaldía mayor of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango. This unit included all of the present day department of Totonicapán, most of Huehuetenango, the northern half of Quiché, the easternmost portion of Quezaltenango, and the Motozintla area of the Mexican state of Chiapas. Towards the end of the colonial period, the corregimiento or alcaldía mayor of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango was made a provincia composed of two jurisdictions: the partido of Totonicapán and the partido of Huehuetenango. The jurisdiction referred to as the partido of Huehuetenango corresponds in approximate territorial extent to the region here designated the Cuchumatán highlands (see Map 2 and Plate 1).

The name "Cuchumatán" means "that which was brought together by great force" and is derived from the compounding of the Mam Indian words cuchuj (to join or unite) and matán (superior force).[1] Another possible derivation may be from the Nahuatl or Mexican word kochmatlán, meaning "place of the parrot hunters".[2] Regardless of origin, the term "Cuchumatán" appears to be an ancient one, and although more specifically associated with the communities of Todos Santos and San Martín in the heart of the mountains, the name broadly refers to the entire upland area of northwestern Guatemala. The beauty of this remote and rugged country is unforgettable, and has moved to superlatives numerous travellers and scholars, from Thomas Gage in the early


Soloma
Jacaltenango
VERAPAZ
PARTIDO DE HUEHUETENANGO
Cuilco
Nebaj
Chiantla
Uspantán
Huehuetenango
Malacatán
PARTIDO DE TOTONICAPAN
SOLOLA
QUETZALTENANGO
Totonicapán
SOCONUSCO
Lake Atitlan
CHIMALTENANGO
Santiago de Guatemala
AMATITANES
SUCHITEPEQUEZ
N
ESCUINTLA AND GUAZACAPAN
0
25
50
km
PACIFIC OCEAN

MAP 2 PROVINCIA DE TOTONICAPAN Y HUEHUETENANGO ca 1678-1786
(showing the eight parish seats of the Partido de Huehuetenango and the relation of the Cuchumatán region to the Alcaldias Mayores of Western Guatemala and the colonial capital of Santiago)

SOURCE: F. de Solano, Los Mayas del Siglo XVIII (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispanica, 1974), p. 96

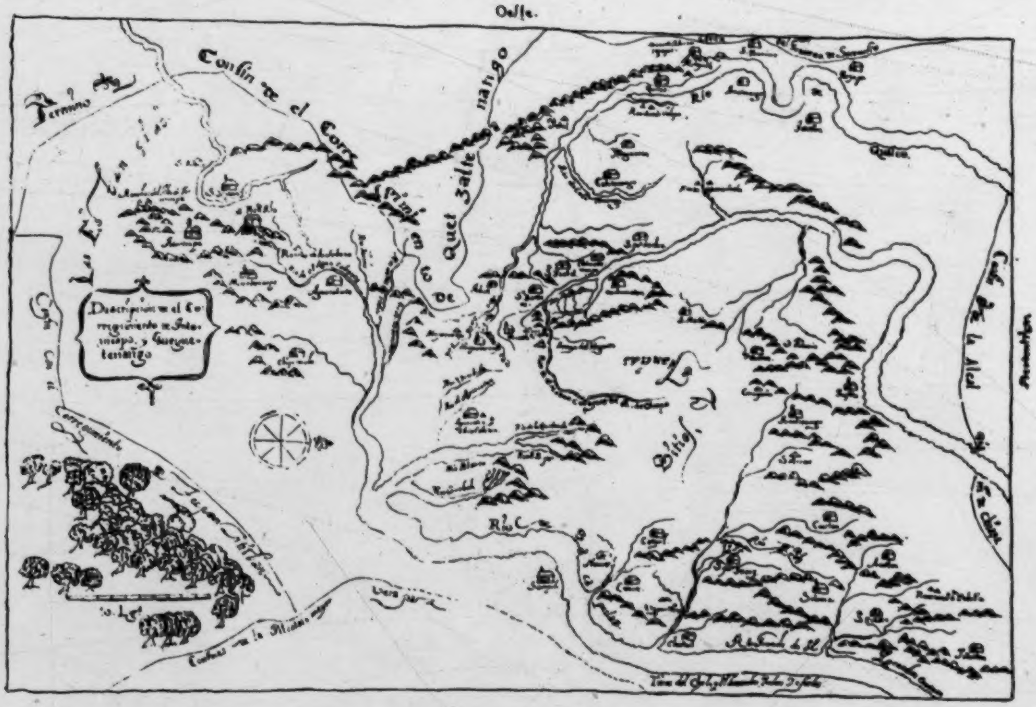

Oeste.
Confin de el Corregimiento de Quetzaltenango
Termino de
Descripcion de el Corregimiento de Totonicapa, y Gueguetenango

Plate 1: The Corregimiento of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango, as depicted in the late seventeenth century by the Guatemalan chronicler Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán in his Recordación Florida. Most of the important Cuchumatán congregaciones are represented. Huehuetenango is located in the centre of the drawing. Distortion and incorrect configuration are most conspicuous in the bottom right or north-east corner.

seventeenth century[3] to John Lloyd Stephens in the late 1830s[4] and Oliver La Farge in the early 1930s[5]. Until recently an inaccessible and isolated part of highland Guatemala, the Cuchumatanes have an aesthetic quality of landscape which is singular, splendid, and difficult to convey in words, although the lines of Guatemalan poet Juan Diéguez, who sought political refuge in the Cuchumatanes in the 1840s, evoke something of the ethereal splendour of the region:

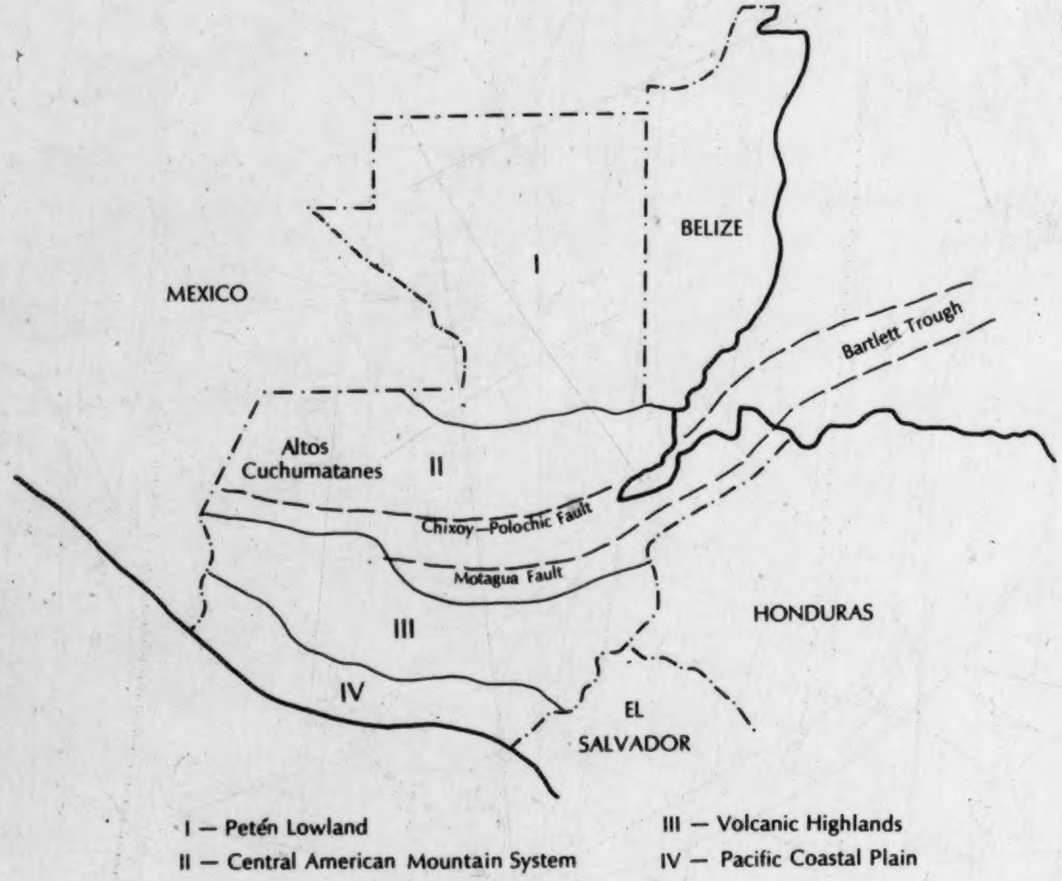
> Oh heaven of my country!
> Oh precious horizons!
> Oh high blue mountains,
> Hear me from over there!
> My soul greets you,
> Peaks of the High Sierra,
> Keepers of that land,
> Where I was at last awakened ...[6]

The Physical Background

Guatemala may be divided into four distinct physiographic-tectonic provinces (see Map 3) which are summarised below.

(I) The Petén Lowland. A low, densely forested plain, generally flat but with occasional undulating topography, the Petén Lowland has well developed karst features formed on gently folded carbonates of Cretaceous or Tertiary age.

(II) The Central American "Antillean" Mountain System. A rugged, folded, and faulted upland region, this mountain system is the continuation in Guatemala of the plateau-like Sierra de San Cristóbal of Mexico which cuts roughly west to east across northern Guatemala before descending into


MEXICO
BELIZE
I
Altos
Cuchumatanes
II
Chixoy—Polochic Fault
Motagua Fault
Bartlett Trough
HONDURAS
III
IV
EL
SALVADOR
I — Petén Lowland
II — Central American Mountain System
III — Volcanic Highlands
IV — Pacific Coastal Plain

MAP 3

PHYSIOGRAPHIC—TECTONIC PROVINCES OF GUATEMALA

Source : T.H.Anderson, Geology of the San Sebastiàn Huehuetenango Quadrangle, University of Texas: Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, 1969, p.88

the Caribbean Sea to form the Cayman Ridge. The "Antillean" range is divided into two physical sub-units by the downcutting of the Río Chixoy. The Cuchumatanes lie to the west of the river while a complex mountain system, which includes the Verapaz highlands, lies to the east.

(III) The Pacific Volcanic Belt. A chain of volcanic peaks of Quaternary origin which rises out of a dissected plateau of volcanic ash, the Pacific Volcanic Belt crosses southwestern and eastern Guatemala before passing into Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

(IV) The Pacific Coastal Plain. A region of detritus shed from volcanic activity, this tilted plain stretches from the lower slopes of the volcanic highlands to the Pacific coast and in places reaches a width of some 80 kilometres.

The predominant tectonic grain of Guatemala trends approximately west to east across the country and is characterised by a series of parallel ridges and valleys belonging to the Central American Mountain System. Two great fault zones, occupied by deep and impressive valleys, traverse Guatemala as arcs gently convex to the south. Known as the Chixoy-Polochic and Motagua faults, these zones are landward extensions of the Bartlett Fault System of the Caribbean Sea[7] (see Map 3). The precise age of the Bartlett Fault System is an issue of some controversy among geologists, but it may date from Miocene or Pliocene times and has been subject to much vertical and lateral displacement since then. The Chixoy-Polochic fault, the northern axis of the Bartlett System in Guatemala, separates largely crystalline rocks to the south from sedimentary rocks to the north. Geologically, the Chixoy-Polochic fault may be considered the southernmost boundary of the Cuchumatanes.[8]

The oldest formations of the Cuchumatanes date back to before the Permian. Over much of its geological history, from Pennsylvanian to Early Cretaceous times, the Cuchumatán region was well below sea level. Consequently, vast continental deposits of shale and limestone, some with magnificent bands of fossils, are found throughout the Cuchumatanes. Salt water springs are also present. The Cretaceous period was marked by the deposition of thick sequences of carbonates along a shallow shelf, resulting in the formation of the Ixcoy limestone. The great thickness of this accumulation suggests that geosynclinal subsidence occurred during most of the Cretaceous, which was also characterised by vigorous local faulting. The Early Tertiary was the time of the major Laramide orogeny which formed the structural features of the Cuchumatanes most recognisable today. The Chixoy-Polochic fault zone was particularly active and the important mineralisation of lead, zinc, and silver in the Chiantla area probably occurred during this time. Late Tertiary uplift along the Chixoy-Polochic fault resulted in rejuvenation of the elevated landscape and the formation of the Cuchumatán highlands as they exist today. The Quaternary volcanism of the highland region to the south of the Cuchumatanes led to the surface deposition of thick pyroclastic layers of pumice and welded tuff, especially around Aguacatán and Chiantla. The Cuchumatán country therefore exhibits a great geological diversity. It is still significantly affected by major geological events such as volcanic eruptions and movement along the active Chixoy-Polochic fault.[9]

Viewed from the south, the Cuchumatanes present a formidable wall of parallel folds trending in a north-west direction, uplifted along the Chixoy-Polochic fault and gradually decreasing in elevation northwards. North of Chiantla the fractured front ranges rise approximately 1000 metres along a steep scarp slope to an extensive carbonate plateau characterised by undulating karst topography. This lofty páramo or altiplano surface, known during the colonial period as the Altos de Chiantla, is generally around 3000 metres in elevation, but in places reaches to almost 3800 metres.

The entire Cuchumatán páramo is riddled with sink holes and other karst features. The drainage system of the plateau is predominantly subterranean. East-flowing streams discharge into tributaries of the Río Chixoy, subsequently draining into the Usumacinta River and the Gulf of Mexico. West-flowing streams drain into the Río Selegua which runs along a deep canyon near the southern edge of the Cuchumatanes before joining with the Río Cuilco in Mexico to form the Río Grande de Chiapas.[10]

Several valleys in the Cuchumatanes contain distinctive evidence of glaciation, chiefly in the form of ice-scoured rocks and morainic debris. The most conspicuous glacial features are a low terminal moraine and an associated area of outwash in a north-west trending valley 12 kilometres in length between the communities of San Sebastian Huehuetenango and Todos Santos. Behind the moraine an intermittent pond occupies a depression once filled with ice. Scattered throughout the till-covered valley are remnants of other recessional moraines. Loops of moraine, in this and other neighbouring valleys, mark the easternmost advance of an ice-cap of around 100 square kilometres in dimension which covered the highest parts of the Cuchumatanes probably towards the end of the Wisconsin or Würm glaciation some 10,000-25,000 years ago. During the earlier Pleistocene glaciations the Cuchumatán region was not sufficiently uplifted to sustain the climatic conditions necessary for the development and maintenance of an icefield.[11]

Away from the bleak, cold, Cuchumatán _páramo_ elevation decreases north and west to the humid, rainforest region of the Usumacinta basin. As holds true for all tropical highland areas, fluctuations in altitude result in an extreme variation of climate, especially temperature regimes. This, in turn, leads to the existence of manifold types of vegetation and a marked diversity in agricultural potential. Stadelman and Recinos divide the Cuchumatán country into four altitudinal zones, each with its own distinctive environmental characteristics.[12]

(I) Tierra Caliente, or "warm land". This zone lies below 800 metres in elevation and has mean annual temperatures of around 25°C. It is characterised by lush tropical growth and produces mahogany woods, bananas, cacao, and coffee.

(II) Tierra Templada, or "temperate land". This zone ranges from 800 metres to around 1500 metres in elevation and has mean annual temperatures of 17°C to 23°C. It is characterised by the gum producing liquidamber tree and is capable of supporting coffee and sugar cane. Wheat can also be cultivated in the upper reaches of this zone.

(III) Tierra Fría or "cold land". This zone ranges from 1500 metres to slightly over 3000 metres in elevation and has mean annual temperatures of 10°C to 17°C, with occasional sub-zero temperatures and resultant frosts. It is characterised by hardy species of pine, fir, oak, and cedar, and may be used to raise apples, potatoes, and wheat. The majority of the cultivated land of the tierra fría, however, is farmed as milpa[13] and is used to grow maize, el santo maíz, the holy corn.

(IV) Región Andina, or "Andean region". This zone is upward of 3000 metres in elevation and has mean annual temperatures of below 10°C with frequent sub-zero temperatures. Frosts are common and there are occasional snow flurries during the cold season.[14] Generally uncultivated, the región andina, especially the Altos de Chiantla around La Capallanía and Chancol, are utilised primarily as pastureland for sheep, and were highly prized as such during the colonial period.

Throughout the Cuchumatanes two seasons prevail: the rainy season and the dry season. The rainy season, or invierno (winter), begins towards the middle or end of May and generally lasts until October. A normal six month rainy season will usually be interrupted at mid-season, sometime in August, by a canícula, or dry period, which may last as long as two weeks. During the rainy season, convectional thunderstorms occur almost daily, for the most part in the late afternoon. Spells of heavy, continuous rain lasting two or three days are also common, and such torrential downpours may cause roads and trails to wash out and greatly hinder access and communication. Severe hailstorms are further characteristic of high elevations and pose a danger to cultivation. The yearly rains terminate in most parts of the Cuchumatanes by early November, when the dry season, or verano (summer), commences. Normally, little rain will then fall until May, when the cycle begins again.

The Cuchumatán highlands are thus comprised of many diverse physical environments, from the bleak, cold, inhospitable lands of the páramo around Paquix and Chancol to the lush, temperate valleys of the northwest and the dry, thorny scrubland of the Río Negro around Sacapulas. This physical diversity has been succinctly summarised by Felix Webster McBryde:

> An immense fault block that rises over 1000 metres above the trough of the Cuilco and Negro drainage basins, with a great escarpment forming the steep southern face, the Altos Cuchumatanes is the most elevated mountain region of its area in Central America. It is essentially a massif of dolomites and limestones in sharp contact with granite, presenting an extraordinarily rugged, deeply dissected surface.
>
> Above the thorny chaparral and cactus of the warm, dry canyon of the Río Negro, the higher reaches of the mountains are covered with pines and coarse grass. Still higher, the smooth, undulant summit area of the Cuchumatanes, foggy, cool and moist the year round, is covered with scattered junipers, pines, and cypress, and with rolling meadows.[15]

The diversity of the physical geography of the Cuchumatán highlands is matched by an equal diversity in the human geography of the region.

The Human Background

In March, 1973, Guatemala supported a population of 5.2 million, slightly under half of whom were classified as "Indian"; "Ladinos", persons of mixed Spanish and Indian descent, comprised the majority of the remainder.[16] Predominantly Indian communities are located largely within the highland region of the country at altitudes ranging between 1000 and 2500 metres. Highland Guatemala, particularly the midwestern highlands around Lake Atitlán and the Cuchumatán highlands of the northwest, may therefore be regarded as Indian Guatemala. It is within this upland region that the highest concentrations of Indian-speaking peoples in Guatemala, some 23 language groups in all, are to be found.

In 1973 the population of the Cuchumatán highlands numbered about one-half million, of whom 73 per cent, or roughly three out of four, were Indians (see Table 1). The native peoples of the Cuchumatanes speak several closely related languages belonging to Mayan stock, the most important of which are Mam, Jacalteca, Chuj, Kanjobal, Aguacateca, Ixil, Quiché, and Uspanteca.

Human settlement is spread unevenly over the Cuchumatanes. Ladino communities occupy the southern margins of the region (Chiantla, Huehuetenango, and La Democracia) and also predominate in the fertile lands of the north and west (Barillas and Nentón). Predominantly Indian communities occupy the higher, more remote, and agriculturally less productive terrain of the central and eastern Cuchumatán country. Settlements, plus surrounding land, are grouped together to form municipios, small township divisions based on local ethnic affiliations. These townships are the most significant cultural units in highland Guatemala.[17] The Indian people of a municipio regard themselves to be a distinctive ethnic association, differing even from the inhabitants of a neighbouring municipio who may speak the same native language. Traditionally, each municipio has its own religious and political organisation, its own unique and distinguishable costume, and its own Roman Catholic patron saint. It is common

TABLE 1

POPULATION OF THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS,[1]

GUATEMALA, MARCH 1973.

SOURCE: CENSO de GUATEMALA, 1973

Municipio	Indian Population	Non-Indian Population	Total Population[2]
Huehuetenango	407	29,967	30,402
Chiantla	8,212	18,510	26,737
Malacatancito	1,874	5,611	7,486
Cuilco	10,091	9,904	19,999
Nentón	9,308	3,304	12,613
San Pedro Necta	8,752	2,617	11,371
Jacaltenango	15,161	640	15,802
Soloma	14,126	1,138	15,304
Ixtahuacán	12,430	1,314	13,745
Santa Barbara	6,496	30	6,526
La Libertad	3,534	11,219	14,756
La Democracia	6,487	7,609	14,099
San Miguel Acatán	13,901	1,107	15,011
San Rafael la Independencia	5,840	60	5,900
Todos Santos Cuchumatán	9,795	818	10,613
San Juan Atitán	7,814	123	7,938
Santa Eulalia	14,212	241	14,459
San Mateo Ixtatán	14,754	877	15,632
Colotenango	9,133	325	9,458
San Sebastián Huehuetenango	7,472	352	7,824
Tectitán	2,131	1,013	3,144
Concepción	7,120	986	8,107
San Juan Ixcoy	7,476	556	8,032
San Antonio Huista	1,424	4,256	5,680
San Sebastián Coatán	7,273	42	7,316
Barillas	22,967	5,278	28,263
Aguacatán	15,875	2,613	18,492
San Rafael Petzal	2,588	160	2,749
San Gaspar Ixchil	3,060	25	3,085
Santiago Chimaltenango	3,203	66	3,269
Santa Ana Huista	1,428	3,324	4,755
Chajul	15,724	2,365	18,092
Cunén	8,296	1,463	9,762
San Juan Cotzal	11,729	967	12,698
Nebaj	25,092	2,155	27,259
Uspantán	25,532	9,465	35,000
Sacapulas	15,406	1,051	16,458
TOTAL	356,125	131,551	487,836

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[1] For statistical convenience, the Cuchumatán highlands are considered as constituting the corporate area of the entire 31 municipios (townships) of the Department of Huehuetenango plus 6 municipios of the Department of Quiché--Chajul, Cunén, Cotzal, Nebaj, Uspantán, and Sacapulas.

[2] Total population figures include 160 people listed in the census as "ignorado", taken to mean those known residents absent from the census area at the time of the count.

for the Indian to be attached to his *municipio* by an almost mystical sense of belonging far stronger than the feeling of being part of the republic of Guatemala. Anthropologist Charles Wagley suggests that this sense of belonging may stem from the *municipio* being "a continuation of the basic societal unit of preconquest society".[18] Such is the case, for example, in parts of highland Chiapas where many native communities "responded to change in public policy so as to reinforce their control of township lands" and consequently "endured as ethnic entities through the colonial period to modern times, often with significant continuities in their internal organisation".[19]

All *municipios* contain a *cabecera* or township centre which bears the same name as the *municipio* itself. The *cabecera* is usually the hub of community life, whether the inhabitants of the *municipio* actually live there or in surrounding *aldeas* (villages) or *caseríos* (hamlets). Morphologically, two main types of *municipio* can be recognised: "town nucleus" (clustered settlement) *municipios* and "vacant-town" (dispersed settlement) *municipios*.[20] Most of the residents of "town nucleus" *municipios* live in the *cabecera* and walk from their homes to outlying fields in order to perform the labour essential for the maintenance of agricultural holdings. Santiago Chimaltenango is a good example of this nucleated pattern of settlement.[21] In contrast, families living in "vacant town" *municipios* are rural based, residing and working in the countryside and having occasion to visit the *cabecera* only infrequently.

In such communities the township centre may be of only modest proportions and contain little else than a church, a plaza or market place, and a few Ladino-owned shops and dwelling houses. The majority of the municipios of the Cuchumatanes are "vacant-town" municipios, a classic example being Todos Santos Cuchumatán, described quite appropriately by Stadelman 40 years ago as "a village within a maizefield".[22]

Agricultural activity in the Cuchumatanes, as throughout all highland Guatemala, centres primarily around the cultivation of corn. Because of the deeply dissected nature of much of the Cuchumatán terrain and the ever increasing pressure exerted by a growing population on limited land resources, corn is frequently planted on steep 45° to 65° slopes, close to the limit at which an agricultural worker can stand upright without difficulty.[23] Some 166 different varieties of maize have been recorded under cultivation in the Cuchumatanes at altitudes ranging from 1200 to 2750 metres.[24] Corn lands above 2000 metres are generally planted in February and March, long before the first rains. This planting is known as the dry season planting (siembra de verano). Corn lands below 2000 metres are generally planted in April and May, shortly before or shortly after the first rains. This planting is known as the rainy season planting (siembra de invierno). The higher fields planted during the siembra de verano grow more slowly and yield less than the lower fields planted during the siembra de invierno.[25] There is a tremendous fluctuation throughout the Cuchumatanes in corn yields. Recently cleared forest lands, such as those of the northern Cuchumatán community of San Ramón, are capable of producing 100-200 lbs. of shelled corn per cuerda (0.04 hectares), but poorer, continuously worked holdings may yield as little as 8-15 lbs. per cuerda.[26]

Beans and squash are usually cultivated in conjunction with corn and the three together constitute the age-old complex referred to by Eric Wolf as "the Trinity of the American Indian".[27] Throughout highland Guatemala this staple plant trilogy has developed a symbiotic relationship in which the tall maize stalk serves as a support for the climbing and soil-enriching bean while squash, a creeper with broad leaves, provides shade at ground level and thus prevents excessive erosion during the rainy season.

In addition to the cultivation of corn there is a notable specialisation at the township level in certain grains, fruits, and vegetables. Wheat is an important cash crop in San Juan Ixcoy, Santa Eulalia, San Mateo Ixtatán, and Soloma, with the finest quality grain coming from San Miguel Acatán and San Sebastian Coatán. Aguacatán is noted for its garlic and onions, Huehuetenango for its peaches, and Todos Santos for its apples. The communities of San Pedro Necta, Colotenango, and Cuilco are famed for their oranges. The Altos de Chiantla are more suited than any other part of the Cuchumatanes for growing potatoes, and the tierra templada around Barillas likewise for the cultivation fo coffee.[28] The local agricultural specialty is usually taken to market and sold. There, other foodstuffs are purchased: corn, beans, squash, potatoes, chile, salt, onions, and tomatoes; a few kilos of panela (a low refined sugar) for sweetening coffee; and perhaps some fish or meat, eaten at most only once a week or, like eggs, bread, and honey, reserved for special festive occasions. The money obtained by selling specialty products at market is therefore used primarily to buy basic provisions, particularly corn. Consumed mostly in the form of thin, unsalted pancakes known as tortillas, corn constitutes the mainstay of the Guatemalan Indian diet.[29]

In addition to agriculture, two other land-related activities in parts of the Cuchumatanes merit mention: sheep raising and salt making.

The upper elevations of the region have been traditionally involved with the raising of sheep since early colonial times, the first flocks having been driven to Guatemala overland from Mexico.[30] The 1964 Agricultural Census of Guatemala recorded that the Department of Huehuetenango supported almost 200,000 head of sheep.[31] Communities associated with sheep raising include San Miguel Acatán, Santa Eulalia, Concepción, San Juan Atitán, San Sebastian Coatán, Soloma, and Todos Santos.[32] Indian sheep farmers generally operate at a small scale with flocks of 15 to 25 sheep.[33] In connection with sheep raising, McBryde recorded Aguacatán, Chiantla, Huehuetenango, and Santa Barbara as important local wool weaving centres during the early 1940s, but noted that most of the

Cuchumatán wool clip--then as now--is bought by itinerant merchants and transported to the Quiché town of Momostenango, the principal wool weaving centre of Guatemala.[34]

Salt making in the Cuchumatanes is carried out at Sacapulas and San Mateo Ixtatán. Production methods are primitive, involving simply the evaporation by sun and fire of briny water leached from nearby mineral springs. Only small amounts of salt are obtained from each evaporation.[35] Sacapulas salt is sold in round cakes and has the reputation of being an effective eye medicine, although the same salt, lacking the vital iodine component of the sea salt of the Pacific coast, was for many years the principal cause of the high incidence of goitre in this part of Guatemala.[36] The sources of salt at Sacapulas are the mineral springs scattered over a small plain on the south bank of the Río Negro or Chixoy. Production has declined in importance since the end of the rainy season of 1949 when the river, swollen by heavy rains, deposited thousands of tons of sand and rock on its flood plain, thus burying and destroying many salt producing springs.[37] At San Mateo Ixtatán, salt water is drawn from wells controlled and operated by the town authorities.[38]

Although sheep raising and salt working, along with some small-scale lead mining at Chiantla and involvement in several communities with the domestic handicraft industry, serve to complement agriculture in various parts of the Cuchumatanes, for the majority of families the land itself remains the focus of human activity. For these people, everyday existence is rooted in an attachment to the seasonal rhythm of the Cuchumatán agricultural cycle (see Diagram 1).

Landholding within the townships of the Cuchumatán highlands must be viewed in the context of national patterns of ownership and distribution. The fundamental characteristic of landholding in Guatemala in the present day is the concentration of sizeable amounts of cultivable land in the hands of a small and wealthy minority, while an impoverished but dignified peasant majority, predominantly Indian, ekes out an existence on a tiny percentage of the total national farmland. Three basic landholding units can be identified: first, large- and medium-sized farms referred to as latifundios, which range in extent from around 45 to over 900 hectares and which generally contain the most fertile agricultural land in Guatemala; second, modest, single-family farms termed familiares, which vary in size from seven to 45 hectares; and third, small, fragmented holdings known as minifundios, which are less than seven hectares in area and usually lack sufficient resources to sustain a family all year round in work and food.[39] Within the Cuchumatanes, the vast majority of landholders fall into the minifundio category and can be considered subsistence farmers, or minifundistas.[40]

The amount of land actually held and operated as a family unit can vary considerably from place to place. In a study involving 23 Cuchumatán townships in 1940, Stadelman found that the average family holding varied

DIAGRAM 1

THE ANNUAL CYCLE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS OF GUATEMALA

FEBRUARY	Corn : siembra de verano/dry season planting	
MARCH		
APRIL	Corn : siembra de invierno/rainy season planting	
MAY		
JUNE	Weeding of the corn fields	RAINY SEASON
JULY		
AUGUST		
SEPTEMBER		
OCTOBER	Corn : harvest of the siembra de invierno	Migration of Indian smallholders to the Pacific piedmont and coastal plain where they work as wage labourers on coffee, cotton, and sugar cane plantations
NOVEMBER		
DECEMBER	Corn : harvest of the siembra de verano	
JANUARY		

from 10.8 acres (4.5 hectares) in Santiago Chimaltenango to 2.7 acres (1.1 hectares) in San Antonio Huista. The usual holding of a family of five persons was found to be between three and six acres (1.2 to 2.5 hectares).[41] Many families therefore possess amounts of land which cannot provide year-round employment and which are unable to meet annual subsistence needs.[42] Consequently, thousands of minifundistas seek part-time employment as wage labourers (cuadrilleros) on the coffee, cotton, and sugar plantations of the Pacific lowlands in order to supplement the meagre incomes derived from their own insufficient farm holdings.

The yearly ebb and flow of seasonal labour to and from the Pacific lowlands constitutes one of the great internal migrations of Guatemala. It was estimated that some 200,000 people, the majority of them Indians, were involved in this migration in the 1950s; by the end of the 1960s this number had swollen to over 300,000, and in the mid 1970s was estimated at more than 500,000.[43] Contracted to work chiefly on coffee fincas for a daily wage which in 1974 rarely exceeded 75 cents, cuadrilleros move to the coast late in October at the beginning of the coffee harvest and return to their highland homes usually in January or February.[44] The plight of the migrant workers of the Cuchumatán community of Santiago Chimaltenango, where three-quarters of those holding land have less than the minimum amount (three arable hectares) necessary for independent family existence, has been concisely depicted by Wagley:

> The larger landholders in Chimaltenango cannot supply enough work for their poorer countrymen and in consideration of the limited terrains of the village, it seems doubtful whether they will ever be able to do so. The coffee plantations, needing large supplies of wage labourers for a short harvest, fill in the gap. The time of the coffee harvest falls in the period when Chimaltecos may leave their own fields; thus they have an opportunity to augment their income by plantation labour with no great slighting of their own fields. Unless, therefore, the present disparity of holdings is made more equal by government decree or internal changes, the labour at the coffee plantations will remain an important part of their economy.[45]

The man-land relationships which compel the people of Santiago Chimaltenango to work several weeks or months of each year as wage labourers for coastal finqueros are mirrored in Indian communities throughout the Cuchumatanes. As early as 1913 the archaeologist-explorer Robert Burkitt observed at Nebaj "an unceasing coming and going of labour contractors and plantation agents getting out gangs of Indians for the Pacific coast".[46] Similarly, Stadelman noted that in the 1930s seasonal migration was common in Concepción, Soloma, San Idelfonso Ixtahuacán, and Todos Santos.[47] The practice is at least as widespread and commonplace in the present day.[48] Attached though he may be to his land and village, and however unattractive the suffocating heat of the lowlands may compare with his cool mountain home, the Indian minifundista throughout highland Guatemala is confronted with a situation which leaves him no alternative but to migrate for part of each year in search of work.[49] There is a rather striking resemblance between this contemporary migration and the ones which occurred during pre-Conquest and early colonial times when Indians from the highlands were required to work in the lowlands in order to meet the tribute demands placed upon them for cacao.[50]

The unfavourable man-land relationships which lie behind seasonal migration to the Pacific lowland plantations are not explained fully by the high rates of population growth Guatemala has experienced during the twentieth century.[51] The present man-land crisis in Guatemala can only be properly understood by looking at landholding from a historical perspective. One of the major features of the colonial period in Guatemala was the moderate success of Indian communities in retaining parts of their ancestral lands, although encroachment at the hands of estate-building Spaniards was by no means unimportant. Significant attrition of Indian common lands began during post-colonial times, particularly towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Following political independence from Spain in 1821, Guatemala embarked on a land reform programme which was designed to abolish the collective system of Indian landholding by sub-dividing ownership of the communal lands among township inhabitants. Various attempts by the national government to force Indians to secure individual titles to their lands met with no success. Consequently, Indian communal holdings were often classified by the Guatemalan government as "unclaimed" land and fell into the hands of Ladinos much more familiar with the legal aspects of landholding legislation than their non-literate and ill-informed Indian counterparts. Around 1875, as the coffee boom began to alter the economic prospects of the country, more systematic and concerted efforts were made by the Guatemalan government to reshape patterns of landholding. The fate of the communal lands was sealed by the administration of President Rufino Barrios which in 1877 ended the system of exacting rents for the use of land from townships as a whole, a system of rental collection dating back to early colonial times. The Barrios administration also passed legislation requiring all individuals to demonstrate private ownership of land by possessing legal titles; the old community title was simply no longer recognised. Although legislation governing landholding had been radically altered in the course of the nineteenth century, the Indian communities most affected by the changes were not necessarily made aware of them. Many simply continued to operate their lands in much the same way as their forefathers. By 1884, Indian communities throughout Guatemala may have lost legal possession of some 100,000 acres of communal land to enterprising coffee finqueros or ambitious Ladino smallholders capitalising on the general ignorance of the Indian.[52]

Since the time of Barrios there has been a steady individualisation of Indian landholding. Ruth Bunzel, working in the 1930s, observed that there was no longer communal ownership of land in the Quiché community of Chichicastenango.[53] Manning Nash, working during the

1950s, noted that all but 15 per cent of the land within the municipio of Cantel, near Quezaltenango, was individually owned.[54] For the Cuchumatán region, Wagley reported that all land in Santiago Chimaltenango in the 1930s, with the exception of some 80 acres utilised as common pasture or for the collection of firewood, was privately owned.[55] For the same time period, however, Stadelman noted the following:

> A few of the towns, such as Santa Ana Huista, Jacaltenango, Ixtahuacán, and San Antonio Huista, are outstanding examples of municipalities still possessing a preponderant amount of land owned in common by the citizens. San Miguel lands are in great part privately owned, only about one-third belonging to the municipality. Cuilco, San Juan Ixcoy, Soloma, Chimaltenango, Santa Eulalia, and Concepción have almost entirely dropped the system, while there is said to be no common land at all in the municipalities of La Libertad, Colotenango, Nenton and La Democracia. In some of the villages the change from communal to private ownership is comparatively recent.[56]

The concept of communal ownership of land has therefore been slow in disappearing. Although the legal structure of landholding has altered radically over the past century, traditional attitudes towards land tenure still prevail in the conservative Indian communities of the Cuchumatanes. Land represents the centre of existence, provides the roots of family life, forms the basis of community social structure, and is the source of bitter antagonism in the event of a dispute over ownership.[57]

It is perceived as belonging to "los antepasados", the ancestors. Custom therefore dictates that land should not be sold but be passed on from father to son to honour, preserve, and continue ancestral tradition.

In view of the existence of such intense and deep-rooted attachments, it is not surprising that many patterns of ritual and ceremony accompany the annual agricultural cycle. The Indian perceives the natural world as inhabited by supernatural beings who demand his constant respect.[58] The raising of corn is of particular religio-ceremonial significance throughout highland Guatemala due to the dependence of the Indian peoples on maize as their staple food. According to the Popol Vuh, the Book of Counsel of the ancient Quiché Maya, "the created man" was made by the "forefathers" Tepeu and Gucumatz from corn and cornmeal dough:

> After that they began to talk about the creation and the making of our first mother and father: of yellow corn and of white corn they made their flesh: of cornmeal dough they made the arms and legs of man. Only dough of cornmeal went into the flesh of our first fathers, the four men, who were created.[59]

A variety of religio-ceremonial rites are associated with maize cultivation in Indian townships throughout the Cuchumatanes. The planting of corn may be preceded by the saying of prayers and the burning of candles and copal for the proper germination of the seed. The harvest of the ripened grain may be accompanied by offering the blood of a sacrificed rooster to the spirit of the cornfield.

Prayers are also said for the protection of the corn against attack by frost and for the granting of sufficient rain. La Farge, in the 1930s, recorded a fascinating ritual at Santa Eulalia:

> In July when the green ears are ripening, it is customary to play a clay flute in the cornfields. As this is just before the beginning of a period of bad winds, not all people do this, since blowing on the flute may bring the wind. It is said that they play this music to protect the field, "to look and see if there might be any animals" and that "cuando estan tocando así el talil, va creciendo contento el santo maís". "When they are playing the flute that way, the holy corn goes growing happily".[60]

The existence of such religio-ceremonial activities and the pattern of Indian life in general indicate that aspects of Mayan culture still flourish in parts of the Cuchumatán highlands. Despite an exposure over the past 450 years to the powerful acculturating forces of western society, the Indian remains a conspicuous and apparently durable element of the human landscape. Having outlined the physical and cultural setting of the Cuchumatanes, it is the purpose of the pages that follow to examine various land-related aspects of Indian life in the region as they have developed through time. This will be accomplished by reconstructing the cultural landscape of the Cuchumatán highlands during the period of its critical evolution from the eve of the Spanish conquest in the early sixteenth century to the end of colonial rule in 1821.

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

[1] Instituto Geográfico Nacional, Diccionario Geográfico de Guatemala, (Guatemala: Instituto Geográfico Nacional, 1961-62), p. 112.

[2] J.L. Arriola, El Libro de las Geonímias de Guatemala, (Guatemala: Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca, 1973), p. 103.

[3] T. Gage (ed. J.E.S. Thompson), Thomas Gage's Travels in the New World, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), pp. 160-167. Gage crossed the Cuchumatanes in 1626 while travelling from Chiapas into Guatemala where he was to serve the Catholic Church for twelve years. An Englishman by birth but a Dominican priest by calling, Gage lived and worked among the Indians of Guatemala until his departure from the Spanish colonies and his return to England in 1637. After returning home to England, where he vehemently renounced the Catholic faith, Gage wrote a valuable account of his experiences and impressions of the New World. The "English American" had this to say about his brief stay at Chautlán (Chalchitán) then a parcialidad (ethnic component) of Aguacatán, an Indian village at the southern edge of the Cuchumatanes:

> The next day I got into the road again, and went to the last town of these Cuchumatlanes called Chautlán, where I stayed all that day and night, and sent before a letter to the Prior of Sacapulas of my going thither the next day. In Chautlán I was very kindly used by the Indians, and liked the town better for the excellent grapes which there I found .... The next morning I made haste to be gone, that I might come sooner to Sacapulas, where I was to find those of mine own profession, with whom I knew I might stay and rest a whole week if I pleased. I had not rid above three leagues, when I began to discover at a low and deep bottom, a pleasant and goodly valley laced with a river whose waters receiving the glorious brightness of Phoebus' beams reverberated up to the top of the mountain, a delightsome prospect to the beholders. The more I hastened to that seeming Paradise, the more did the twinkling and wanton stream invite me down the hill ....

[4] J.L. Stephens, Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1949), Vol. 2, Ch. XIII, pp. 185-200. Stephens, accompanied by the artist Frederick Catherwood, travelled extensively throughout Yucatán, Chiapas, and Central America in the mid-nineteenth century and was favourably impressed with the natural beauty of the Cuchumatanes:

> We descended to the valley, left the village on our right, crossed the spur, and saw the end of our day's journey, the town of Huehuetenango, situated on an extensive plain, with a mild climate, luxuriant with tropical productions and surrounded by immense mountains. Before us was the great Sierra Madre [the Cuchumatanes], the natural bulwark of Central America; the grandeur and magnificence of the view was disturbed only by the distressing reflection that we had to cross it ....

Stephens was particularly taken by the village of Todos Santos:

> As we descended the temperature became milder. At twelve o'clock the immense ravine opened into a rich valley a mile in width and in half an hour we reached the village of Todos Santos. On the right, far below us, was a magnificent table cultivated with corn and apple and peach trees covered with blossoms and young fruit. We had again reached the tierras templadas, and in Europe or North America the beauty of this miserable unknown village would be a theme for poetry.

[5] O. La Farge, Santa Eulalia: The Religion of a Cuchumatán Indian Town, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. v and p. 1. La Farge, a pioneering Middle American anthropologist, was, like Gage and Stephens before him, quite struck with the splendour of the Cuchumatanes:

> [The] guarded, beautiful, forgotten country [of] the Heights of Cuchumatán form an isolated region of high ridges and precipitous valleys, hard to approach, hard to cross in any direction, and, in the main, high, cool, fertile, and beautiful beyond the possibility of expression.

[6] The eight stanzas of Juan Diéguez' poem To The Cuchumatanes may be found in Chapter Three of Adrián Recinos' Monografía del Departamento de Huehuetenango, (Guatemala: Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1954), pp. 30-33. The same lines may also be appropriately read at the Mirador, or "viewpoint", some 13 kilometres to the north of Chiantla near the summit of the steep scarp slope of the Cuchumatanes. Early on a bright clear morning, this scenic vantage point gives a commanding view of the splendours of highland Guatemala, from Volcán Tacaná and Volcán Tajumulco in the west, past Volcánes Santa María, Tolimán, and Atitlán in the south, to Volcán Agua in the east.

[7] T.H. Anderson, Geology of the San Sebastian Huehuetenango Quadrangle, Guatemala, (University of Texas: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1969), p. 87.

[8] D.N. Blout, Geology of the Chiantla Quadrangle, Guatemala, (Louisiana State University: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1967), p. 1.

[9] Blout, op. cit., pp. 115 ff., contains a very comprehensive account of the geological history of northwestern Guatemala. Parts of the Cuchumatanes, including the communities of Colotenango and Cuilco, were adversely affected by the eruption of Volcán Santa María in 1902, when volcanic ash and sand destroyed crops throughout western Huehuetenango and caused several rivers to overflow. The Cuchumatanes were also badly shaken, although less so than the central and eastern parts of Guatemala, during the major earthquake of February 4, 1976 which caused widespread damage and disruption throughout the republic and claimed the lives of an estimated 25,000-30,000 Guatemalans.

[10] Blout, op. cit., pp. 107 provides a concise treatment of the geomorphology of the Cuchumatán plateau.

[11] Anderson, op. cit., pp. 137 ff. presents interesting information derived from various field observations concerning the glaciation of parts of the Cuchumatanes during late Wisconsin times.

[12] R. Stadelman, "Maize Cultivation in Northwestern Guatemala", Contributions to American Anthropology and History, (Washington: Carnegie Institute of Washington, Vol. VI, Nos. 30-34, 1940), pp. 92-93; and Recinos, op. cit., pp. 85-88.

[13] Milpa is a term generally understood to mean land devoted to growing corn, although in Guatemala it may be employed to indicate any parcel of land which is under cultivation.

[14] John Lloyd Stephens, op. cit., p. 196, and his artist companion, Frederick Catherwood, spent a chilly and uncomfortable night on the Altos de Chiantla while travelling across the Cuchumatanes en route to the ruins of Palenque, Chiapas, in the late 1830s:

> Toward morning, however, we were reminded of our elevated region. The ground was covered with a hoarfrost and water was frozen a quarter of an inch thick. Our guide said that this happened regularly every night in the year when the atmosphere was clear. It was the first ice we had seen in the country.

[15] F.W. McBryde, A Cultural and Historical Geography of Southwestern Guatemala, (Washington: Smithsonian Institute of Social Anthropology, Publication No. 4, 1945), p. 7.

[16] The distinction between Indian and Ladino is based on culture and language rather than on physical or racial characteristics. Anthropologist Sol Tax has summarised the distinction as follows:

> Indians speak Indian languages, wear Indian costumes, have Indian surnames, and live like Indians. A Ladino has a Spanish surname and speaks Spanish as a mother tongue; he wears European-type clothes, wears shoes, lives in a house with windows, is usually literate, and has, in general, a better standard of living than his Indian neighbour. None of these criteria holds universally, but on the basis of all of them one can usually make a safe judgement.

("The Municipios of the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala", American Anthropologist, Vol. 39, 1937, p. 432.)

Throughout highland Guatemala Ladinos are for the most part town-dwellers while the majority of people living in the countryside are Indians. George McCutchen McBride, writing in the early 1940s, considered Indians as comprising 65 per cent of the population of Guatemala; "Highland Guatemala and its Maya Communities", Geographical Review, Vol. 32, 1942, p. 253. Felix Webster McBryde, writing in the mid 1940s, estimated the Indian contingent at around 60 per cent of the national population; McBryde, _op_. _cit_., p. 9. Nathan Whetten, writing in the early 1960s but working from the unreliable 1950 Census of Guatemala, notes Indians as comprising 54 per cent and Ladinos 46 per cent of the national population; _Guatemala: The Land and the People_, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 49. Available statistical evidence indicates that the Indian population has dwindled relative to its Ladino counterpart over the past one hundred years or so, but this trend derives more from the changing criteria employed in distinguishing those categorised as "Indian" rather than from an absolute numerical decline. The difficulty of population estimation and Indian-Ladino classification is compounded by the unreliability of Guatemalan census information. Although the 1973 census recorded a national population of 5.2 million, Francis Gall of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional believes that figure to be underestimated by about one million, due chiefly to the lack of complete penetration of remote rural areas by census enumerators and underreporting by the Indians of their family sizes (Gall, personal communication). Gall speculated that the present population of Guatemala is about 6.5 million.

[17] Tax, _op_. _cit_., p. 425.

[18] C. Wagley, "The Maya of Northwestern Guatemala", _Handbook of Middle American Indians_, Vol. 7, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p. 55.

[19] G.A. Collier, _Fields of the Tzotzil: The Ecological Bases of Tradition in Highland Chiapas_, (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1975), pp. 15 and 157.

[20] McBryde, _op_. _cit_., p. 96; and Tax, _op_. _cit_., pp. 427-433.

[21] C. Wagley, "Economics of a Guatemalan Village", _Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association_, No. 58, 1941, pp. 9-10.

[22] Stadelman, _op_. _cit_., p. 101.

[23] Stadelman, _op_. _cit_., p. 110.

[24] Stadelman, _op_. _cit_., p. 112 and Plates 7 and 8, facing p. 265; and Wagley (1969), _op_. _cit_., p. 50. Stadelman's excellent report, based on extensive and thorough field work in the Cuchumatanes during the late 1930s, remains the most comprehensive study of maize cultivation in highland Guatemala.

[25] Stadelman, *op. cit.*, p. 113; and Wagley (1969), *op. cit.*, p. 50.

[26] Stadelman, *op. cit.*, p. 117; and Recinos, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

[27] E. Wolf, *Sons of the Shaking Earth*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 63.

[28] Recinos, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193.

[29] J.M. May and D.L. McLellan, *The Ecology of Malnutrition in Mexico and Central America*, (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 94-104. Stadelman, *op. cit.*, p. 93, states that the "usual daily rationing of Indian corn is about 2 lbs. per day for an adult, which is more than sufficient to supply the daily energy requirements as it has been calculated to furnish some 3480 calories". May and McLellan, using data from the Instituto de Nutrición de Centro América y Panamá, note that although "corn and sugar are available in adequate amounts", there is a "level of deficiency in certain specific nutrients ... serious enough to make malnutrition a public health problem"; they record 677,000 children of less than five years of age suffering from varying degrees of malnutrition in Guatemala. O.H. Horst, "The Specter of Death in a Guatemalan Highland Community", *The Geographical Review*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1967, p. 164, states that in Ostuncalco "it is probable that 20 per cent of the children who die in this region do so because of complications arising out of starvation".

[30] McBryde, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

[31] Dirección General de Estadística, *Censo Agropecuario 1964*, Tomo *III* (Guatemala: 1969), p. 242.

[32] Recinos, *op. cit.*, p. 205; and Stadelman, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-99.

[33] D.A. Cabrera and B.R. Escobar, "Consideraciónes Sobre Producción de Lana y su Aplicación Arteseñal en el Municipio de San Miguel Acatán del Departamento de Huehuetenango", *Guatemala Indígena*, Vol. X, Nos. 3-4, 1975, p. 99.

[34] McBryde, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-65 and Maps 13 and 16.

[35] McBryde, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60, 73-74; and C.L. Petterson, *The Maya of Guatemala: Their Life and Dress*, (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1976), pp. 55-66. Both works contain accounts of salt production at Sacapulas.

[36] Goitre, a condition of morbid enlargement of the thyroid gland often manifest as a large, pendulous swelling in the neck, was the scourge of the Sacapulas area until government action earlier this century made it mandatory for iodine to be added to locally produced salt. The shocking manifestations of the disease, however, were very much in evidence when Thomas Gage passed through Sacapulas in the early seventeenth century:

> At the first sight I was a little daunted to behold the Prior [of Sacapulas] who looked most fearfully with a bladder from his throat swelled almoust round his neck. This hung over his shoulders and breast, and stayed up his chin, and lifted up his head so that he could scarce look any whither but up to Heaven. In our discourse he told me that disease [goitre] had been upon him at least ten years, and that the water of that river [Negro] had caused it in him and in many others of that town .... When I came to the town, I discovered many men and women with bladders in their throats like the poor Prior, which made me almost unwilling to drink there any chocolate made with the water, or eat anything dressed with it, until the Prior did much to encourage me and told me that it did not hurt but only some, and those who did drink it cold.

From Gage, op. cit., pp. 166-167.

[37] Petterson, op. cit., p. 55.

[38] Stadelman, op. cit., p. 95, offers the following observations on the exploitation of the salt resources of San Mateo Ixtatan:

> The salt deposits consist of three wells, Shul, Nanal, and Almul, in which water with a high percentage of salt accumulates and is periodically removed to be boiled down by the Indians. These wells have been worked since before the Conquest and the salt is famed throughout the Department as having medicinal properties. The deposits were recently taken over by the Government and rented for $258 per month to a concessionaire who sells the water to the people.

Since the time of Stadelman's investigations, one well has been abandoned as a source of salt water and the remaining two have fallen under municipalidad control. Of the two wells still in operation, one is worked daily (from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.) while the other is worked only intermittently on a bi-monthly schedule; that is, worked for two weeks then given two weeks to replenish. Each afternoon, the women of San Mateo, resplendent in bright red and yellow huipiles and carrying large clay pots, weave their way down to the salt wells which lie at the bottom of a steep valley to the north of town. Under the supervision of an Indian official, pots are filled with salt water and a record kept of how much each woman carries off. The municipalidad later collects twenty cents (Guatemalan) for each pot of salt water taken from the wells. Salt is obtained by simply boiling down the water. The larger of the two wells in operation is located adjacent to an important pre-Hispanic structure which is the scene of Indian costumbre activities.

[39] Universidad de San Carlos, Tenencia de la Tierra en Guatemala, (Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos, 1971), pp. 122-125.

[40] Information concerning the number, size, and distribution of farm holdings in Guatemala is available from two national agricultural censuses, the first conducted in 1950, the second in 1964. The reliability of the published statistics to reveal the complete landholding situation is undermined by the fact that the 1950 agricultural census recorded only those farms containing one cuerda of land or more; that is, about 0.1 of an acre or about 0.04 of a hectare. Many minifundios in Guatemala are smaller than one cuerda and in fact were incorporated into the 1964 agricultural census, which placed no restrictions as to minimum size of farm holding. This classificatory change in data collection accounts largely for the significant increase in total farm numbers in 1964 over 1950. Regardless of statistical inconsistency, however, the essential reality of land ownership in Guatemala remains the same; namely, a small percentage of the total farmland (14.3 per cent in 1950 and 18.6 per cent in 1964) is shared between a large percentage of farms (88.4 per cent in 1950 and 87 per cent in 1964), while a large percentage of the total farmland (72.2 per cent in 1950 and 62.6 per cent in 1964) is held by a small percentage of farms (2.1 per cent in 1950 and 2.9 per cent in 1964). Further discussion of the Guatemalan landholding situation is contained in Whetten (op. cit., pp. 92-106) and in L.B. Fletcher et al., Guatemala's Economic Development: The Role of Agriculture, (Iowa: Iowa State University, 1970).

[41] Stadelman, op. cit., p. 105.

[42] E.C. Higbee, "The Agricultural Regions of Guatemala", The Geographical Review, Vol. 37, 1947, p. 180, reckons that "about three arable hectares (7.5 acres) is the minimum necessary for independent family existence on average *tierra fria* land", in the highlands of Guatemala.

[43] L. Schmid, The Role of Migratory Labour in the Economic Development of Guatemala, Research Paper No. 22, (Madison: Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin, July 1967), pp. 1-2; B. Colby and P. van den Berghe, Ixil Country: A Plural Society in Highland Guatemala, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 33; and "Co-ops Quiet Revolution for Indians of Guatemala", a New York Times News Service article which appeared in the Edmonton Journal, September 18, 1975.

[44] New York Times News Service, *op. cit.*, footnote 43.

[45] Wagley (1941), *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

[46] R. Burkitt, "Explorations in the Highlands of Western Guatemala", The Museum Journal, (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia), Vol. XXI, No. 1, 1930, pp. 58-59. The remarkable Mr. Burkitt also had this to say of his stay at Nebaj in 1913:

> Years ago, when I first visited Nebaj, it was a different place from now .... I had struck the place at an especially bad moment. The plantation agents were at the height of their activity, scattering money, advance pay for work, and every Indian was able to buy rum. The rum business and the coffee business work together in this country, automatically. The plantation advances money to the Indian and the rum seller takes it away from him and the Indian has to go to work again. Work leads to rum and rum leads to work .... I used to think that Chichicastenango was the drunkenest town in the country, but now I think it is Nebaj. My plans at Nebaj were upset by rum. There are two ruin places that I know of that are to be got at from Nebaj and I did nothing at either of them, and one of them I never even saw. The Indians I was going to take were never sober.

[47] Stadelman, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-103.

[48] While in Todos Santos in August 1977, I was informed of the presence of a group of Ladino *habilitadores* (contractors) negotiating terms with various people in the community for work on the coast. *Habilitadores* generally operate in conjunction with a Ladino member of a community who will either engage a worker directly or who may forward a loan in time of need and later demand that the debtor work off the loan by labour on a coastal *finca*. Such a system of "hiring" labour was operative in Todos Santos in the mid 1940s and is discussed by Maud Oakes in her books, *The Two Crosses of Todos Santos*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 241-242, and *Beyond the Windy Place: Life in the Guatemalan Highlands*, (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Youngs, 1951), pp. 80-81.

[49] A view of the relationship between the plantation economy of the Pacific lowlands and the predominantly subsistence economy of the western highlands within a Neo-Marxist "dependency" framework is contained in C.A. Smith, "Beyond Dependency Theory: National and Regional Patterns of Underdevelopment in Guatemala", *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 5, No. 3, August 1978, pp. 574-617. According to Smith, it was the coffee boom of the late nineteenth century and not the Spanish conquest of the sixteenth that unleashed the forces of capitalism in Guatemala and led to the emergence, at the national level, of a developed "core" and an underdeveloped "periphery". An interesting theoretical discussion of the "articulation" as opposed to the "penetration" of non-capitalist modes of production by the capitalist mode may be found in A. Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy", *New Left Review*, No. 107, 1978, pp. 47-77.

[50] A discussion of cacao tribute in pre-Columbian and early colonial times may be found in J.F. Bergmann, "The Distribution of Cacao Cultivation in Pre-Columbian America", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 59, No. 1, March 1969, pp. 85-96.

[51] Guatemala's recent population explosion is reviewed in J.D. Early, "Population Increase and Family Planning in Guatemala", *Human Organization*, Vol. 34, No. 3, Fall 1975, pp. 275-287.

[52] R. Naylor, "Guatemala: Indian Attitudes Toward Land Tenure", *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, October 1967, pp. 627-630.

[53] R. Bunzel, *Chichicastenango*, (New York: American Ethnological Society, Publication 22, 1952), p. 16.

[54] M. Nash, "Machine Age Maya", *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, No. 87, 1958, p. 93.

[55] Wagley (1941), *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

[56] Stadelman, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

[57] Naylor, *op. cit.*, p. 634.

[58] The Indian believes that each living thing, whether tree, plant, flower, or bird, and even inanimate objects such as stones and rocks, are watched over by guardian spirits who must at all times be respected and on no account offended. This system of belief prescribes certain obligations and patterns of behaviour. For example, one should never complain while climbing a steep hill for fear of offending the guardian spirit who may show displeasure by sending sickness. So sensitive is the Indian to the possibility of invoking the anger of a guardian spirit that when a tree is felled, the stump is covered in order to prevent the shortened tree from being ridiculed amidst its companions in the forest. Cf. S. Tax, "The Maya of the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala", in *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Vol. 7, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p. 91.

[59] A. Recinos, *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), p. 167.

PART TWO

CONTACT AND CONQUEST (1500-1541)

CHAPTER TWO

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ON THE EVE OF SPANISH CONQUEST

> The pre-Conquest history of
> the Cuchumatanes is still a
> matter for guesswork.
>
> Oliver La Farge (1947)

Introduction

Written over 30 years ago but actually reflecting a state of learning closer to 50 years ago, the above-quoted words of the late Oliver La Farge are regrettably still quite appropriate.[1] Although important contributions and sophisticated refinements have been made by scholars to the field of Mesoamerican studies since the time of La Farge, few major investigations have focussed specifically on the Cuchumatán highlands. The reasons for this neglect are not easy to ascertain, but possible explanations may be related to the physical isolation and relative inaccessibility of many parts of the Cuchumatanes, and the greater potential for archaeological and ethnohistorical investigation afforded by other regions of Mesoamerica. From an archaeological perspective, highland Guatemala has been worked much less than lowland Guatemala, due principally to the greater size and complexity of the settlement remains in the latter region compared to the former one. From an ethnohistorical perspective, the human groups in highland Guatemala which have attracted most scholarly attention have been the Quichean-speaking Indians, since it is chiefly for Quichean culture that native documentation relating to life in pre-Conquest times exists. The Cuchumatán area, predominantly a non-Quichean highland region, has been negatively affected by the lowland and Quichean-oriented thrust of research within the Guatemalan context of Mesoamerican studies.

A strong case can in fact be made that the Cuchumatanes have unnecessarily suffered from being "understudied". Although the ethnohistorical potential of the region is severely limited, the same cannot be said of the region's rich archaeological potential. Apart from Woodbury and Trik's work at Zaculeu[2] and two excavations at Nebaj, one by an American team in the late 1940s,[3] another by a French group in the mid 1960s,[4] there has been little done in the way of intensive, systematic archaeological investigation at other Cuchumatán sites. The paucity of the archaeological record and the limitations of the ethnohistorical record jointly pose a research problem of no small proportion.

Confronted with such a dearth of data, any reconstruction of the cultural landscape of the Cuchumatán highlands on the eve of Spanish conquest must necessarily be tentative and incomplete; but it is important to sketch even the thinnest strands in order to establish some outline, however blurred or indistinct, of land-life relationships during late pre-Hispanic times. To this end, four procedures will now be followed. First, a brief summary of the culture history of highland Guatemala will be presented to provide a frame of reference by chronological period and developmental stage. Second, the archaeological record which has been established for the Cuchumatanes will be set down with a view to placing the cultural development of the region in a general Mesoamerican perspective. Third, the ethnohistorical sources which relate to the pre-Conquest Cuchumatanes will be indicated, and comment made on the information contained in them. And fourth, an integration of the archaeological and ethnohistorical information will be carried out with the objective of interpreting, from a fusion of the archaeological and ethnohistorical records, the broad features of late pre-Hispanic life. Wherever possible, inferences will be drawn from other better documented areas close in time and space to the Cuchumatán region. The domain of the Quiché Maya is of crucial importance in this respect since the rich Quichean sources complement the sparse Cuchumatán data and can be used comparatively to provide a clearer, more critical reconstruction.

An Outline of the Culture History of Pre-Conquest Highland Guatemala

Highland Guatemala, which forms an important part of the cultural area referred to by twentieth century scholars as Mesoamerica,[5] has a long record of human settlement. Recent excavation of an Early Man campsite at Los Tapiales, in Totonicapán, has indicated that the site was probably occupied around 9000 B.C. by a small group of hunters using fluted points possibly to hunt big game.[6] At the other end of the time scale, one of the earliest surviving historical documents, written by the conquistador Pedro de Alvarado at the time of the Spanish conquest in 1524, describes Guatemala as "well-populated, with many strong towns".[7] This long period of human occupancy, stretching over at least 10,000 years, can be divided into four major chronological-developmental stages known as Paleo-Indian, Preclassic, Classic, and Postclassic.

Paleo-Indian life dates back to the time of man's first entry into the Guatemalan highlands, perhaps as early as 15,000 B.C., and lasted roughly until 5000 B.C.[8] This long early period is perhaps best regarded as one of hunting and the gathering of such wild food resources as grains, nuts, berries, seeds, and roots. The Paleo-Indian bands living at this time were small in number and essentially nomadic. After 5000 B.C. a gradual but fundamental shift occurred in subsistence patterns. Hunting and gathering was slowly abandoned in favour of a settled agricultural life made possible by the successful domestication of certain food plants, the most important of which were maize, beans, squash, avocado, chile peppers, pumpkin, and tomato.[9] By about 1500 B.C., sedentary village life was a cultural reality which contrasted sharply with the migrant camp life of earlier times.

The chronological period designated as Preclassic or Formative began around 1500 B.C. and continued until 300 A.D.[10] During this time the peoples of highland Guatemala underwent a radical cultural transformation. Out of the simple, spatially-confined, village style of life there emerged, by 500 B.C., a more stratified society; and, within a few more centuries, the political notion of state. Paralleling this socio-political change was an intensification of the agricultural subsistence base and the rapid growth of population. A sizeable demographic increase is inferred from the greater number of settlements, their larger spatial extent, and indications of a marked socioeconomic complexity within and among them.[11]

Classic culture in highland Guatemala developed from the life style of the Formative period around 300 A.D. and flourished throughout the region until about 1000 A.D.[12] The Classic has long been considered a time of peace and prosperity, characterised by a theocratic, essentially non-urban, non-imperialistic way of life. This traditional view of the period has recently been questioned, and it is perhaps most fruitful to regard the Classic as peaceful and prosperous only in relation to the more bellicose and turbulent times which were to follow.[13] Although the zenith of Classic civilisation in the Maya area is more closely associated in terms of architecture and artistic expression with the great lowland settlements of Copán, Tikal, Palenque, and Piedras Negras, a number of Classic settlements also developed in the Guatemalan highlands. The most important of these was the settlement of Kaminaljuyú, part of present-day Guatemala City. Around 400 A.D. Kaminaljuyú came under the sphere of influence of the great Mexican city of Teotihuacán. Locally there had already evolved a highly-organised and sophisticated society, the theocratic orientation of which is indicated by temple mounds located around ceremonial plazas to form acropolis-like complexes.[14] Classic settlements in the highlands were situated predominantly on open valley floors or hill slopes in close proximity to running water, and were essentially undefended but strongly nucleated ceremonial centres. Large populations were supported in the vicinity of these centres by an intensive agricultural base which utilised as farming land areas peripheral to the ceremonial complex and in which terracing and irrigation played a major role.[15]

The Postclassic period opened around 1000 A.D., and closed with the Spanish conquest of Guatemala in 1524. As a chronological span, the Postclassic is generally divided into two units: the Early Postclassic of 1000 to 1200 and the Late Postclassic or Protohistoric of 1200 to 1524.[16] Life in Postclassic times is generally depicted as fundamentally secular, militaristic, and disruptive in comparison to the relatively settled, non-aggressive, religious existence of the Classic. This characterisation is substantiated by a move of populations away from unprotected valley bottoms or open land to fortified mountain slopes or hilltops, although not all valley-situated Classic sites were abandoned. The tendency towards locational change when and where it did occur was precipitated by internal strife and internecine warfare resulting possibly from a population climax or crisis.[17] According to Robert Carmack, the most important event of the Postclassic in highland Guatemala was the arrival in the region around 1250 A.D. of belligerent Mexican migrants led by a "Toltec" military priesthood. Entering from the Gulf Coast by way of the Usumacinta and Chixoy rivers, these powerful and superbly-organised invaders, the traditional founders of the Quiché dynasty, in the course of some 200 years established political control over much of highland Guatemala.[18] By the end of the Postclassic, however, the supremacy and hegemony of the Mexicanised Quiché over other Indian groups in Guatemala had greatly diminished. With their defeat in 1524, by the forces led by Pedro de Alvarado, Spanish domination began.

The Archaeology of the Cuchumatán Highlands

The archaeological record reveals traces of human occupation in the Cuchumatanes from the late Preclassic through the Classic to late Postclassic or Protohistoric times. As such, human settlement in the region spans three of the four major Mesoamerican chronological periods and developmental stages, and can therefore roughly be dated back at least 2000 years, although man was undoubtedly present long before this time.

In the manuscript copy of the second edition of the Diccionario Geográfico de Guatemala, a total of 140 archaeological sites are listed for the entire Cuchumatán area.[19] Table 2 lists 51 of the 140 Cuchumatán archaeological sites recorded in the Diccionario Geográfico which have been most systematically excavated or investigated. Map 4 indicates their spatial distribution. Of the 51 sites for which reasonable archaeological data exist, 29 can be placed, chiefly by the establishment of ceramic sequences, in at least one major Mesoamerican chronological period. These sites are shown in Table 3.

The archaeological record reflects a pattern of cultural development for the Cuchumatán region which is consistent with the broad evolutionary features previously outlined for the Guatemalan highlands as a whole. The stability and tranquility of Preclassic and Classic life is suggested by the undefended nature of sites such as Cambote, Chalchitán, and Río Blanco, all of which are situated without fortification on open valley floors. These and other Classic settlements functioned primarily as administrative-ceremonial centres for dense populations living and farming in the surrounding areas. Within the Cuchumatanes, the settlements which probably attained the most refined Classical level in terms of art and architecture were those of Chaculá, a complex which most likely had considerable contact with the great Lowland Maya centres to the north and east.[20]

The non-defensive layout and location of the Classic sites stand in marked contrast to the defensive morphology and situation of the majority of Postclassic sites, particularly those of the late Postclassic or Protohistoric.

TABLE 2

IMPORTANT PRE-HISPANIC SETTLEMENT COMPLEXES IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS, GUATEMALA: A SUMMARY OF THE ESTABLISHED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD (See Map 4)

No. on Map 4	Name of Site	Department	Topographic Location[1]	Site Classification[2]	Occupational Sequence	Mexican-Quiche Arch. Features	Data Source[3]
1.	Chaculá	Huehuetenango	Valley	-	Classic	-	Seler/Recinos
2.	Chanquejelve	"	Intermediate	P.D.	-	X	La Farge
3.	El Bosque	"	Spur	P.D.	-	X	La Farge
4.	Carvao	"	Spur	P.D.	Classic (?)	-	La Farge
5.	Buena Vista	"	Valley	P.D.	-	X	La Farge
6.	Cu Manchon	"	Hilltop	P.D.	-	X	La Farge
7.	Tilayón	"	Spur	-	-	-	La Farge
8.	Cuja	"	Valley	P.D.	-	-	La Farge
9.	Zaculeu	"	Intermediate	D	Early Classic to Protohistoric	X	Woodbury/Trik
10.	Malacatancito	"	Top of ridge	D	Protohistoric	X	Fox
11.	Cerro Pueblo Viejo	"	Hilltop	D	-	-	Fox
12.	Tenam	"	Hilltop	D	-	-	Fox
13.	El Caballero	"	Hilltop	D	Protohistoric	-	Fox
14.	Cambote	"	Intermediate	N.D.	Late Preclassic & Early Classic	X	Smith
15.	Chicol	"	Intermediate	P.D.	Early and Late Classic (?)	X	Smith
16.	Piol	"	Intermediate	N.D.	-	X	Smith
17.	Xetenam	"	Hilltop	P.D.	-	X	Smith
18.	Cucal	"	Valley	N.D.	Preclassic (?)	-	Smith
19.	Pucal	"	Hilltop	P.D.	-	-	Smith
20.	Huitchum	"	Hilltop	P.D.	Classic and	X	Smith
21.	Chalchitán	Huehuetenango	Valley	N.D.	Preclassic (?) to Postclassic	X	Smith
22.	Tenam Xolchun	"	Intermediate	D	Protohistoric	X	Smith
23.	Chichoche	"	Intermediate	N.D.	-	-	Smith
24.	Xoch	El Quiché	Valley	-	-	-	Burkitt
25.	Chichel	"	Intermediate	-	-	-	Burkitt
26.	Chutixtiox	"	Hilltop	D	Protohistoric	X	Smith
27.	Chutinamit	"	Intermediate	D	Postclassic and Protohistoric	X	Smith
28.	Xolchun	"	Intermediate	P.D.	Classic to Protohistoric	X	Smith
29.	Río Blanco	"	Valley	N.D.	Preclassic and Early Classic: Protohistoric(?)	-	Smith
30.	Chuchun	"	Valley	N.D.	Classic	X	Smith
31.	Xolpacol	"	Hilltop	D	Protohistoric	X	Smith
32.	Xecataloj	"	Valley	N.D.	-	-	Smith
33.	Vitenam	"	Intermediate	N.D.	-	-	Smith
34.	Tixchun	"	Valley	N.D.	Postclassic	-	Smith
35.	Xuil	"	Intermediate	N.D.	-	X	Smith
36.	Oncap	"	Intermediate	N.D.	Protohistoric	X	Smith
37.	Pacot	"	Hilltop	D	Protohistoric	X	Smith
38.	Caquixay	"	Valley	N.D.	Late Classic and Protohistoric	X	Smith
39.	Tuchoc	"	Valley	N.D.	-	X	Smith
40.	Acihtz	"	Valley	N.D.	Protohistoric	X	Smith
41.	El Tigre	"	Hilltop	P.D.	-	X	Smith
42.	Mutchil	El Quiché	Hilltop	N.D.	-	X	Smith
43.	Vicaveval	"	Hilltop	D	Protohistoric	X	Smith
44.	Tzicuay	"	Intermediate	P.D.	Early and Late Classic, Postclassic	X	Smith
45.	San Francisco	"	Intermediate	P.D.	-	X	Smith
46.	Chipal	"	Intermediate	P.D.	Postclassic to Protohistoric	X	Smith
47.	Pulai	"	Valley	N.D.	-	-	Smith
48.	Nebaj	"	Valley	N.D.	Early Classic to Postclassic	-	Smith/Kidder
49.	Baschuc	"	Valley	N.D.	Postclassic and Protohistoric	X	Fox
50.	Bijux	"	Valley	N.D.	Protohistoric	X	Fox
51.	Lamak	"	Valley	-	Protohistoric	-	Fox

Total: 51 sites. 140 archaeological sites are registered for the entire Cuchumatán region in Francis Gall's manuscript copy for the as yet unpublished Second Edition of the Diccionario Geográfico de Guatemala.

[1] Topographic Location - Valley: Site is located in a natural valley.
Intermediate: Site is located on the slope of a hill or on a plateau.
Hilltop: Site is located on top of a hill.

[2] Site Classification - D.: Defensive
P.D.: Potentially defensive
N.D.: Nondefensive

[3] Data Source - R. Burkitt, "Explorations in the highlands of Western Guatemala," The Museum Journal, University of Pennsylvania, Vol. XXI, No. 1, Philadelphia 1930.

J.W. Fox, Quiché Conquest - Centralism and Regionalism in Highland Guatemalan State Development, (University of New Mexico: Albuquerque, 1978).

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A. Recinos, Monografía del Departamento de Huehuetenango, (Guatemala, 1954).

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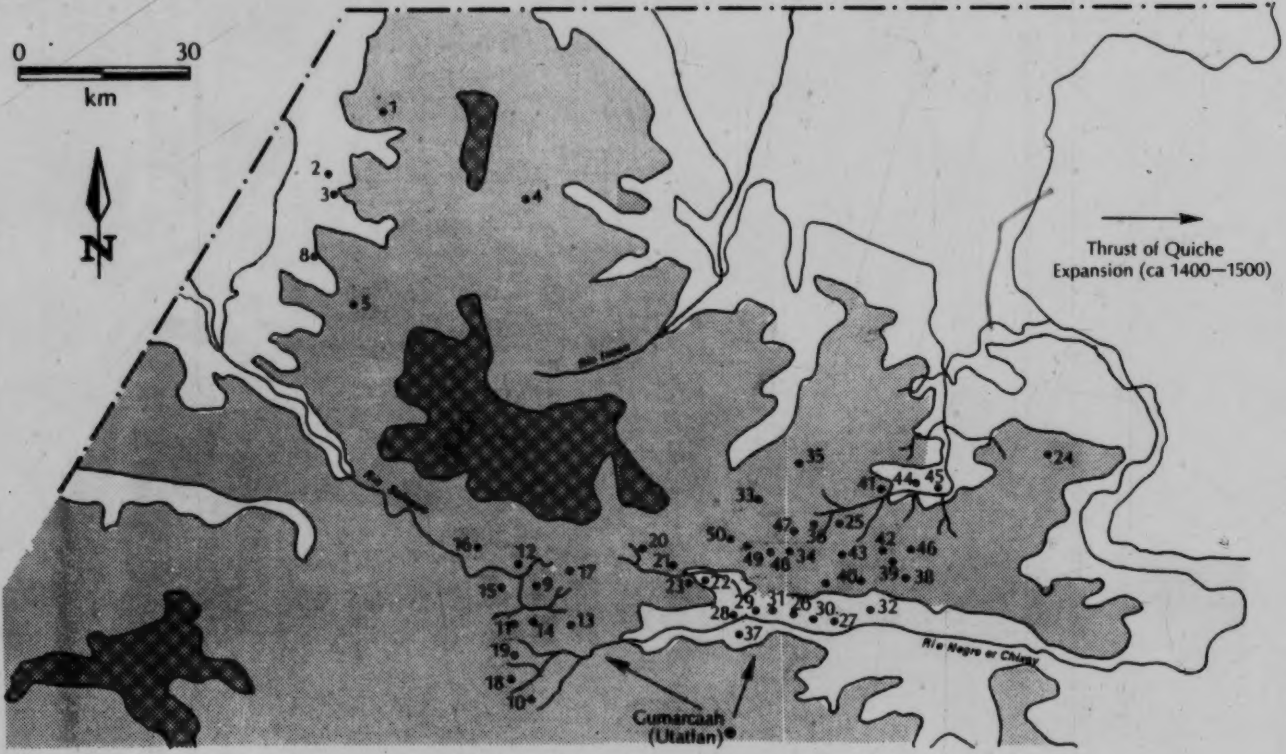

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Río Negro or Chixoy
Gumarcaah
(Utatlan)
Thrust of Quiche
Expansion (ca 1400–1500)

Numbers correspond to site names listed in table 2

□ Land under 800 metres (tierra caliente)

□ Land between 800 and1500 metres (tierra templada)

▨ Land between 1500 and 3000 metres (tierra fria)

▩ Land over 3000 metres (Region Andina)

MAP 4

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS, GUATEMALA

TABLE 3

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS WHICH CAN BE PLACED IN A MAJOR MESOAMERICAN CHRONOLOGICAL PERIOD

Preclassic (1500BC-300AD)	Classic (300-1000AD)	Early Postclassic (1000-1200AD)	Late Postclassic or Protohistoric (1200-1524AD)
	Chaculá		
	Carvao (?)		
	Zaculeu	Zaculeu	Zaculeu*
			Malacatancito*
			El Caballero*
Cambote	Cambote		
	Chicol		
Cucal (?)			
	Huitchun (?)		Huitchun*
Chalchitán(?)	Chalchitán	Chalchitán	
			Tenam Xolchun*
			Chutixtiox*
		Chuitinamit	Chuitinamit*
	Xolchun	Xolchun	Xolchun*
Río Blanco	Río Blanco		Río Blanco (?)
	Chuchun		
			Xolpacol*
		Tixchun	
			Oncap
			Pacot*
	Caquixay		Caquixay
			Acihtz
			Vicaveval*
	Tzicuay	Tzicuay	
		Chipal	Chipal*
	Nebaj	Nebaj	
		Bashuc	Bashuc
			Bijux
			Lamak

*Indicates defensive or potentially defensive site.

Source: same as Table 2.

During the Postclassic open and undefended valley sites were generally abandoned in favour of more readily defensible upper slope or hilltop sites, many of which, including Chutinamit, Chutixtiox, and Pacot, are surrounded by deep ravines or gullies. Although some valley sites indicate an unbroken sequence of occupation from Classic through to Postclassic times which is not accompanied by a move towards appreciable fortification, these sites were later protected by military outposts. Such was likely the case of the open-sited Chalchitán, which may have been defended by the nearby hilltop site of Tenam-Xolchun.[21] This was probably also the case at the long settled Mam capital of Zaculeu, located on an open plain, but protected by the surrounding hilltop sites of Tenam, Cerro Pueblo Viejo, and El Caballero in addition to having some defensive structures of its own.[22]

From the archaeological evidence, hostile and warlike times are inferred for most of the Postclassic. Such unsettled conditions have throughout Mesoamerican history been characteristic of densely populated or overpopulated areas. Concomitant with this period of unrest and flux was an era of strong and widespread Mexican influence, indicated by the presence in many Postclassic Cuchumatán sites of such diagnostic architectural features as altar shrines or platforms, double stairways, enclosed ball courts, round and long structures, and a centralised position in the ceremonial plaza of the main temple-pyramid complex.[23]

The Ethnohistory of the Cuchumatán Highlands

The Indian peoples of the Cuchumatanes have left a scant and insubstantial documentary record which makes the task of historical reconstruction at best only tentative. The most influential autochthonous Indian group of the Cuchumatán region, the Mam, have but one early extant document, the Título Mam, an account dealing primarily with land disputes between the Mam and the Quiché in the Quezaltenango area during the mid-sixteenth century.[24] The Sacapulas basin is the only part of the Cuchumatanes for which an important Indian record relating to life in pre-Hispanic times exists. This is the Quichean document entitled Título de los Señores de Sacapulas.[25] The chronic paucity of the Cuchumatán ethnohistorical record is partially supplemented by several of the rich Quichean sources which touch briefly but significantly on many aspects of pre-Conquest history as seen through Indian eyes. The Quichean sources other than the Sacapulas document which furnish useful references concerning the Cuchumatán region prior to the arrival of the Spaniards include the Popol Vuh[26], the Título C'oyoi[27], the Títulos Nijaib, the Historia Quiché de Don Juan de Torres, the Testamento de los Xpantzay, the Título de los Indios de Santa Clara[28], and the Rabinal Achi[29].

It can safely be assumed that the Quichean Indians and other groups in highland Guatemala during pre-Hispanic times had in their possession written books or pictographic codices. It has been established that versions of the Popol Vuh and the Título de los Señores de Sacapulas were in existence before the Spanish conquest; Bartolomé de las Casas even records having seen some original native documents around the year 1540.[30] Unfortunately, no written or pictographic works which date back to pre-Hispanic times in highland Guatemala have survived into the present day, unlike those, for instance, that have survived for the Mixtec region of Mexico.[31] After the Conquest, Spanish priests taught a number of Indians to write in their own language using the Latin alphabet, and in this way important pre-Conquest events were frequently recorded. In the words of the Dominican chronicler, Francisco Ximénez, the parish priest of Santo Tomás Chichicastenango who in the early eighteenth century first found or was shown the Popol Vuh: "they [the Indians] changed their way of writing their histories into our way of writing".[32] The Quichean peoples were particularly assiduous in this regard, and have left behind a rich and valuable assortment of native documentation which, although written in post-Conquest times, relates to life in the Guatemalan highlands before the arrival of the Spaniards.

The purposes for which the native documents were written were often more specific and practical than a desire to record merely for the sake of posterity. Documents were sometimes written with a view to obtaining from the Spanish colonial administration an official title to a tract of land, or recognition of the right to such privileges as tribute collection through verification of connections with the pre-Hispanic elite.[33] Regardless of the motives which first prompted the Quiché to write in the style of their conquerors, the documents which emerged from the practice contain many important statements about land, settlement, tribute relationships, and the political history of the late pre-Conquest Quiché state. Since many parts of the Cuchumatanes had come under Quiché hegemony during Protohistoric times (A.D. 1200-1524), native Quichean documents which record this pattern of conquest and rule can be consulted as fruitful sources of information. It is the objective of the concluding section which follows to integrate relevant ethnohistorical data with the archaeological evidence outlined earlier in order to establish a rudimentary "reconstructive synthesis" for the Cuchumatán highlands on the eve of Spanish conquest.

A Reconstructive Synthesis of the Cuchumatán Highlands on the Eve of Spanish Conquest

(i) Political Economy

The most important political event in the late pre-Conquest history of highland Guatemala was the spectacular rise to power throughout the region of the Mexicanised Quiché people. According to Quiché mythology, around 1250 A.D. bands of war-like "Toltec" migrants, possibly Chontal or Nahua speaking, moved from the legendary Tulán of the Gulf Coast of Mexico south and east into the Guatemalan highlands.[34] One of these small migrant groups established a defensive hilltop base in the Chujuyub mountains above the Quiché basin and subsequently gained control over the surrounding country and the indigenous Mayan peoples, known ethnohistorically as the Wukamak or Vuc Amag, who occupied it.[35] The invaders were easily absorbed linguistically by the much more numerous Wukamak; but, being exceptionally well-organised and led by an authoritarian military priesthood, the immigrant group was able to exert a powerful political influence over the autochthonous inhabitants. From this fusion of the two traditions, one Mexican, the other Mayan, the ruling dynasty of the Mexicanised Quiché Maya was born.

After successfully consolidating their position in what later became their heartland, the Quiché founded the political capital of Gumarcaah, later known as Utatlán. From Gumarcaah a series of expansionistic campaigns were launched, resulting in the greater part of highland Guatemala falling under Quiché hegemony. The Popol Vuh states that this period of expansion began during "the fifth generation of men":

> They came here to the town of Gumarcaah, as the Quiché named it, when Kings Cotuha and Gucumatz and all the lords came. There had then begun the fifth generation of men, since the beginning of civilization and of the population, the beginning of the existence of the nation.
>
> There, then, [at Gumarcaah] they built many houses and at the same time constructed the temple of God; in the center of the high

> part of the town they located it when
> they arrived and settled there.
>
> Then their empire grew ...[36]

Although Carmack has recently established that Gumarcaah was in fact founded during the eighth generation, in about 1400 A.D.,[37] chronological inconsistencies in the ethnohistorical evidence do not seriously hinder the reconstruction of the spatial evolution of the Quiché conquest state. Sometime between the years 1400 and 1475, under the consecutive leadership of "the marvellous kings" Gucumatz (1400-1425) and his son Quicab (1425-1475),[38] the Quiché brought most of highland Guatemala under the rule of Gumarcaah. This process of military conquest and political expansion witnessed the incorporation into the Quiché realm of the Cuchumatán provinces of Sacapulas, Aguacatán, Cunén, and the territories of the northern Mam and the Ixil, all of which lay to the north of the Quiché capital of Gumarcaah[39] (see Map 4).

Perhaps the single-most important political unit of the Cuchumatanes to succumb to the rule of Gumarcaah was the northern Mam region of present day Huehuetenango, the regional capital of which was the ancient settlement of Zaculeu[40] (Plate 2). Zaculeu shows an uninterrupted record of occupation from Early Classic times until the Spanish conquest undertaken by Gonzalo de Alvarado, the brother of Pedro de Alvarado, in 1525. Such a continuity of settlement, lasting at least 1000 years, is not common in highland Guatemalan archaeological sites.

Plate 2: The ancient Mam capital of Zaculeu, looking north and west across the ceremonial centre to the steep scarp slope of the Cuchumatán highlands.

Zaculeu functioned as a political and religious centre for much of the northern Mam region. Consequently, the greatest part of the population it served lived far beyond its immediate environs.[41] Communities aligned with Zaculeu included Cuilco and Ixtahuacán, both of which fought alongside the Mam of Zaculeu against the Spaniards in 1525.[42] To the west, the sovereignty of Zaculeu extended along the Selegua river. Northwards, the rule of Zaculeu penetrated high into the more remote areas of the Cuchumatanes, probably into the valley of Todos Santos and beyond since it was from these parts that a relief force was sent down to assist the Mam ruler Caibil Balam in his struggle against the Spaniards at Zaculeu in 1525.[43]

Although the exact political nature of Zaculeu's relationship with surrounding Mam communities in the Cuchumatanes is difficult to ascertain, there is no doubt that it was an important centre which exercised control over an extensive and populous hinterland. The fall of Zaculeu to the invading Quiché in the early years of the fifteenth century must therefore have constituted a dramatic upheaval for the northern Mam, and rendered much of the western Cuchumatanes under the rule of Gumarcaah. Ethnohistorically, this event is recorded in both the Popol Vuh and the Título C'oyoi:

> Here is the destruction and division of the fields and the towns of the neighbouring nations, small and large. Among them was that, which in olden times, was the country of the Cakchiquel, the present

> Chuvila (Chichichastenango - the place of the nettles), and the country of the people of Rabinal, Pamaca (Zacualpa) ... and the towns of the peoples of Zaculeu .... These [peoples] hated Quicab. He made war on them and certainly conquered and destroyed the fields and towns of the people of Rabinal, the Cakchiquel, and the people of Zaculeu: he came and conquered all the towns, and the soldiers of Quicab carried his arms to distant parts ....[44]

> ... our conquerors of the hamlets and fortified centers, they are the great warriors, our grandfathers and fathers ...; then the Mam of Zakiulew were driven out ... before their mountains and plains, there the mountains and plains [of Zaculeu] were taken; these were all their mountains and plains, their beautiful places, their structures; this was the succession of the lordship by Don Q'uikab ...; our grandfathers and fathers cast them out, when they inserted themselves [among] the Mam of Zakiulew ... indeed they were fierce warriors; ... the fortified centers and settlements were brought down by them when they entered into the mountains and plains; ... their riches and wealth were fragmented, their structures and residences were torn into pieces, their precious stones and jewels, and black and golden stones were carried off ....[45]

At roughly the same time as the conquest of the Mam of Zaculeu, the Quiché also accomplished the successful subjugation of the communities of Sacapulas and Aguacatán. These two campaigns are summarily recorded in one of the Xpantzay documents and in the Título de los Señores de Totonicapán.[46] Another document relating to the Sacapulas area entitled Título de los Caniles specifically states that people from Gumarcaah "came to take the rule ...; thus all united at Mount Ramason, where [the Quiché] took charge of the government".[47]

Sacapulas and Aguacatán were highly desirable areas over which to exercise control. Both were situated in tierra templada country which provided the Quiché with a variety of foodstuffs not available in their tierra fría heartland. Both were also associated with valuable natural resources. Sacapulas was an important salt-producing centre and the closest such source to Gumarcaah, and Aguacatán seems to have been connected with the supply of gems and precious metals.[48] Salt, a commodity which in pre-Columbian times served along with cacao and chile as a medium of exchange,[49] was probably produced from the mineral springs at Sacapulas by the same primitive process of evaporation and leaching that is still employed in the present day. There is, however, a strong suggestion that the Quiché used the forced labour of prisoners of war in the exploitation of the Sacapulas salt deposits. This situation is indicated in the account of the Spanish governor of Verapaz, Martín Alfonso Tovilla, who visited Sacapulas in the early seventeenth century:

> This town in ancient aboriginal times served as a jail or prison, where the Quiché kings, to whom these lands belonged, enclosed the captives from the wars which they continually had with their neighbours, because these Quiché kings were very powerful .... Every night they put the captives in a kind of rock pen which was very large, and by day they made them go to the salt factory, where they made much salt, and it was of great importance to their king, and because of this factory and the scarcity of salt, [the Quiché] king was more powerful than his neighbours ....[50]

Other territories assimilated by the Quiché in their expansion northwards from Gumarcaah included the lands of

Cunén and the Ixil people. The ethnohistorical evidence of this pattern of conquest is scant, but the Rabinal Achi, a ceremonial dance-drama recorded by the Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg in the mid-nineteenth century and considered a reliable source by Carmack,[51] clearly states that one of the protagonists in the depicted action, the Quiché Achi, was "chief of the strangers of Cunén and the strangers of Chajul".[52] The Rabinal Achi gives no indication as to when this conquest took place, but it probably occurred around the same time as the Quiché subjugation of Zaculeu, Sacapulas, and Aguacatán; that is, in the early years of the fifteenth century. The Cunén area and the Ixil community of Chajul lacked the economic and strategic significance of either Aguacatán or Sacapulas. Quiché control over these territories was probably loose and indirect, perhaps being exercised through the Quiché-implanted lords who resided at Sacapulas and who owed allegiance to Gumarcaah.[53]

The ethnohistorical evidence for Quiché domination of parts of the Cuchumatanes is corroborated by the findings of archaeology. While there is at present no strong settlement pattern evidence linking the Quiché with the Sacapulas area, nonetheless a marked ceramic similarity between the Sacapultec sites of Chutixtiox, Chutinamit, Pacot, and Xolpacol and the Quiché capital of Gumarcaah is suggestive of a close relationship.[54] On the other hand, both the Aguacatán site of Tenam-Xolchun and the Mam capital of Zaculeu exhibit numerous settlement features characteristic of Gumarcaah elements which suggest a strong and direct Quiché influence.[55]

After the successful conquest of these parts of the Cuchumatanes, the archaeological evidence indicates that the Quiché established administrative enclaves modelled on Gumarcaah within the principal centres of the subjugated peoples. This inference from the archaeological record is substantiated by the following lines from the *Título C'oyoi* which specifically mention the founding of a Quiché enclave at Zaculeu:

> ... the younger brother and sons of the lords ... were given instructions by the great lord, Don Q'uicab; ... "you valiant warriors, you conquerors of the fortified centers, you treaders of the land; go and be inhabitants of the lands, at the fortified centers of the subject peoples, so that they do not arrive there again ... conquer, you warriors, lancers; likewise go back and forth continually, make many land boundaries for us at each milpa in the canyons of the fortified center", it was said to them [by Q'uicab]; ... the inhabitants of the lands left [and went] before the Sakiulew people, [and] ... the Tz'itzol (a branch of the Mam living near Zaculeu) ...; "grab them by the armpits and sacrifice them, trample them, make yourselves valiant warriors, and watchful guardians ...".[56]

The Quiché conquest of much of highland Guatemala was therefore, to quote Carmack, "accompanied not only by the sacrifice of some of the captives (to the Quiché gods of war, Avilix and Tohil), but also by a measure of political control, sub-administrators being placed in many of the conquered settlements".[57] It was the important task of these resident "sub-administrators" to maintain Quiché authority in conquered provinces and ensure that subjugated communities regularly furnished forth various items of tribute for the lords of Gumarcaah.

Quiché expansionist campaigns were motivated, according to the Popol Vuh, by a desire for "the aggrandizement of the kingdom"[58] and the attainment of a prosperous conquest state in which subjugated peoples would pay tribute in goods and services to Gumarcaah. The Quiché were singularly successful in achieving this goal. At its maximum extent, reached under the rule of Quicab the Great around the mid-fifteenth century, the Quiché conquest state was large even by Postclassic Mesoamerican standards, stretching from the rich cacao lands of Soconusco in the southwest to the highlands of Verapaz in the north and east. Territorially, the state was some 26,000 sq. km in area, and supported perhaps as many as one million people. It may have been the largest political entity to have evolved in the entire culture history of highland Guatemala.[59]

Brief accounts which record the paying of tribute by the conquered peoples to the Quiché at Gumarcaah are contained in the Popol Vuh and one of the Nijaib documents:

> ... the small towns and the large towns paid high ransoms; they brought precious stones and metals, they brought honey of the bees, bracelets, bracelets of emeralds and other stones, and brought garlands made of blue feathers, the tribute of all the towns ....
>
> It was not little what [Gucumatz and Quicab] did, neither were few, the tribes which they conquered. Many branches of the tribes came to pay tribute to the Quiché; full of sorrow they came [to Gumarcaah] to give it over ....[60]

> ... the towns, as many as these chiefs ... [of Gumarcaah] ... had conquered, came to pay tribute. They all came to leave it, without any of them failing to do so, because they were all subject to these chiefs, their conquerors ....[61]

There is no information in the ethnohistorical sources concerning the regularity of tribute payment, but it is likely that a levy was exacted every 40 or 80 days, as recorded by Las Casas for the people of Verapaz.[62] The tribute brought from the subjugated provinces into Gumarcaah was extremely varied. A Nijaib document records cacao, pataxte (a fruit similar to the cacao bean), fish, shrimp, turtles, iguanas, and cotton from the Pacific Coast.[63] The Título de Santa Clara mentions fish, crabs, and precious stones from the Tzutuhil people of Lake Atitlán.[64] From the Cuchumatán region, Sacapulas would have provided salt, copper, and small fish.[65] Aguacatán would have paid tribute in tierra templada agricultural produce and possibly also in precious stones and metals.[66] Other Cuchumatán communities subject to Quiché rule would presumably have paid tribute in whatever item could be locally produced and was considered desirable, such as fruit, corn, lime (important in the preparation of corn for eating), stone and timber for construction purposes, animal skins for clothing, and numerous forest-derived products (dyes, tannin, kindling, and torches).

It is thus fairly clear, from the archaeological and the ethnohistorical evidence, that by about the middle of the fifteenth century the Quiché had brought the greater part of highland Guatemala, including several areas of the Cuchumatanes, under the political and tributary jurisdiction of Gumarcaah. Having determined that the Quiché were indeed highly successful in forging a conquest state, it is now necessary to seek an explanation as to how and why the people of Gumarcaah were able, in the course of a few generations, to establish their rule over much of the land and the people of highland Guatemala. Carmack feels that the rise to power of the Quiché is associated directly with their strongly Mexicanised background, particularly their religio-militaristic system of beliefs, their superior material apparatus, and the nature of their social organisation:

> The Quiché succeeded mostly because they were led in their military conquests and ambassadorial politics by leaders with the training, equipment, and purpose to succeed at these. For a time the other peoples of highland Guatemala were unprepared for such politics - materially, ideologically, and organizationally - and during this period the Quiché expansion took place.[67]

Carmack maintains that a primary motive of Quiché conquest was to obtain victims who were later sacrificed to the sanguinary gods Avilix and Tohil. Like the Aztec of the Valley of Mexico, the Quiché waged war to feed their ever-hungry gods whose benevolence and blessing, the Quiché believed, could only be assured by the ritual dispatch of human captives on the sacrificial altar. War and conquest were therefore necessary in order to maintain a supply of victims required to placate the gods. Such a system of belief must have been a strong force in propelling the Quiché towards establishing their conquest state.[68]

Two other attributes instrumental in the success of Quiché expansion were an effective military apparatus and a ranked social-military organisation with well-defined notions of authority and mobility.

Among the superior weaponry of Mexican origin employed by the Quiché against their less well-equipped enemies were the bow and arrow, the metal-tipped spear, the obsidian-bladed sword, the round shield, and cotton-quilted armour. The possession of this more sophisticated weaponry gave the Quiché a distinct military advantage over other less-Mexicanised groups in the highlands.

Added to this material superiority was a social organisation which placed a strong emphasis on authority and an elaborate system of military ranking in which several stations of office can be distinguished. Success in war was an important means of social mobility. By performing in combat with valour and distinction it was possible for warriors of low rank (labal) to attain a higher military status (achih, galel, ahpop) which in turn improved their social recognition. This prospect of rising upwards through the ranks to a higher social elevation must also have served to stimulate the desire for military success.[69]

An important combination of religious, social, and military influences of Mexican origin was therefore largely responsible for the emergence of the Quiché to a position of political supremacy among the various Indian peoples of highland Guatemala by the middle years of the fifteenth century. There can be little doubt that the Quiché, during the reigns of their two most famous leaders, Gucumatz and Quicab, extended the rule of Gumarcaah over much of the Cuchumatanes. Those parts dominated included the numerous towns affiliated with Zaculeu, the towns of the Ixil country, and the communities of Aguacatán, Sacapulas, and Cunén.

The exact spatial extent of Quiché power in the Cuchumatanes is still, however, an issue of contention. Recinos, chiefly on the basis of similarities between the archaeological sites of the Cuchumatanes and those of the central Quiché, speculates that the domination of the Huehuetenango area by the forces of Quicab the Great did not end with the conquest of Zaculeu and the establishment of a line of fortresses along the Cuilco and Selegua valleys. Rather, asserts Recinos, Quiché domination reached well into the heart of the Cuchumatanes, to the Mam-speaking communities of Todos Santos and San Martín, and to the Jacalteca-speaking valley of the Río Huista.[70]

Contrary to this view, Fox, in a recent study of the process of Quiché territorial expansion, maintains quite explicitly that "the Jacalteca ... were beyond Quiché control and, seemingly, influence".[71] The more cautious La Farge and Byers hold that in all likelihood

> the high mountain barrier of the Cuchumatanes preserved its isolation, and like the various tribes immediately

> north and west ... to whom the names Alcalaes and Lacandones were so loosely applied, it may have consisted of one or a number of petty provincial chiefdoms [where] there must have been a good many little towns, with a small semi-aristocracy, not very lofty, without stupendous monuments or striking riches, living out in a provincial way their simpler version of the general Mayan pattern of life.[72]

La Farge and Byers concede that Quiché influence "did reach well in the Cuchumatanes", but further contend that, at least in the Jacalteca-speaking parts of the highlands, "there must have been little here to attract them".[73]

A marked difference of opinion as to the precise extent and degree of Quiché penetration of the Cuchumatanes can therefore be identified in the scholarly literature. Despite this aspect of spatial indeterminacy, however, the archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence is generally suggestive of a strong and widespread Quiché influence operating throughout much of the Cuchumatán region in late Postclassic or Protohistoric times. Those parts of the Cuchumatanes that undoubtedly fell to the invading Quiché in the early years of the fifteenth century can, for some time thereafter, be regarded as integral territorial components of an impressive conquest state. Power over conquered peoples was maintained by implanted Quiché colonies whose primary function was to control and regulate the flow of tribute from subjugated lands to Gumarcaah.

By the end of the fifteenth century the political hegemony of the Quiché over the peoples of highland Guatemala had diminished considerably. Around 1475, following the death of the mighty Quicab, internal dislocations resulted in one major branch of the Quiché, the Cakchiquel, severing their affiliation with Gumarcaah and forming their own political system. Upon breaking with Gumarcaah, the Cakchiquel migrated some 60 kilometres to the south and east where, in the area of present day Tecpán, they founded their capital of Yximché on the mountain of Ratzamut, and from there initiated their own pattern of conquest.[74]

The secession of the Cakchiquel from the Quiché precipitated a series of wars between Gumarcaah and Yximché which lasted eleven years. The outcome of this long struggle was the gradual ascendancy to power of the Cakchiquel over the Quiché. On one occasion the Quiché were completely routed and suffered the ignominious shame of having their rulers ceremoniously sacrificed to the Cakchiquel gods.[75] Prolonged warfare with the Cakchiquel had the effect of weakening Quiché control over a number of subjugated territories, including parts of the Cuchumatanes. By the early years of the sixteenth century at least three Cuchumatán groups had revolted against the rule of Gumarcaah. The Título de Santa Clara records that the Quiché were expelled from the lands of the Agaab people of Sacapulas, from the lands of the Balamiha ("jaguar house") people of Aguacatán, and from the lands of the Mam people of Zaculeu.[76]

By the end of the second decade of the sixteenth century, only four years before the arrival of the Spaniards, it appears that a distinct change had taken place in the relations between the rulers of Gumarcaah and peoples formerly administered by the Quiché as part of their conquest state. At the height of Quiché rule, the relations between Gumarcaah and conquered communities were similar to those of a feudal lord and his vassals. After the successful revolt of outlying Quiché-dominated settlements against rule from Gumarcaah, relations, in the words of Carmack, more closely resembled "those of feudal lord to manorial lord".[77] This change in the nature of political relations is perhaps best exemplified by the situation of the Mam of Zaculeu. Once totally subject to Quiché authority, the Mam of Zaculeu had by the time of the Spanish conquest re-asserted sovereignty over much of their territory and had emerged from the status of vassals to that of potential allies. Alvarado himself reported that the Mam ruler, Caibil Balam, was received with great ceremony and respect at Gumarcaah.[78]

The eclipse of Quiché power and the concomitant resurgence of former Quiché-controlled peoples through force of arms to the status of self-determining nations resulted in the political fragmentation of highland Guatemala in the years immediately prior to conquest by Spain. Upon their arrival in 1524, the Spaniards therefore found a political situation characterised not by unity but by diversity. Although the Cakchiquel seem to have risen to a position of political eminence among the emerging Indian nations, a vacuum of power prevailed throughout highland Guatemala on the eve of Spanish conquest. There are strong indications that this vacuum of power would have been filled by the Aztecs of the Valley of Mexico had the Spaniards not arrived before them and altered completely the course of Mesoamerican history.[79]

(ii) Land, Settlement, and Society

The late Postclassic or Protohistoric period between the years 1200 and 1524 was a time of invasions, conquests, and almost perpetual strife throughout highland Guatemala. In view of conditions of flux making life essentially an unstable affair, a primary consideration in the human occupation of the land was the need for defence. This need is clearly reflected in the location and layout of the majority of late pre-Hispanic Cuchumatán settlements.

Most Protohistoric settlements in the Cuchumatanes belong to one of three defence-oriented categories: first, those which are located on defensive hilltops or spurs of land, such as the Aguacatán settlement of Tenam-Xolchun, lying at the end of a small plateau surrounded by deep ravines;[80] second, settlements which may not be particularly well-positioned defensively but which have either artificial devices of protection (bulwarks, causeways, ditches or walls), or could have been defended from nearby hilltops, such as the Mam capital of Zaculeu;[81] and third, settlements which have both a naturally-defensive location and the additional advantages of man-made defences, such as Chutixtiox and Chutinamit in the Sacapulas basin.[82]

An emphasis was therefore placed, in locating or planning settlements, on the need for protection. Of the 18 Cuchumatán sites which can be positively identified as having signs of Protohistoric occupation, 12 exhibit defensive or potentially defensive characteristics (see Table 3).

The predominant settlement complex associated with the occupation of the Cuchumatanes on the eve of Spanish conquest was that of the tinamit-amag, a highland Guatemalan variation of a fundamentally "centre-periphery" pattern of settlement in which a social as well as a spatial distinction can be made. Tinamit, a Nahua word meaning "walled or fortified towns", were located on naturally defensive or artificially protected terrain. According to Carmack, tinamit were established under the wave of Mexican influence which swept the highlands of Guatemala after 1250 A.D. Residential units were often located adjacent to the tinamit, as at Chutixtiox and Zaculeu, but the tinamit were generally so physically confined as to prevent any massive agglomeration of people. In this sense tinamit, although strongly nucleated, were mostly non-urban or at best semi-urban entities which never attained the size or complexity of such truly urban centres as Teotihuacán or Tenochtitlán. Tinamit were essentially religio-military strongholds where the priests and rulers lived, and to where the common people turned for spiritual guidance in times of peace and physical protection in times of war.[83] A. Ledyard Smith provides an excellent summary of the functional importance of the tinamit of the Rabinal and Sacapulas valleys in the context of the changes which highland Guatemala as a whole underwent between the Classic and Postclassic periods:

> Evidence pointing to the comparative peacefulness of life during Classic times ... and the warlike conditions that followed this relatively quiet era until the [Spanish] conquest is strong. There is a great contrast between the nondefensive valley sites of the early periods and the late [Postclassic] hilltop defensive sites. The former are open to attack from all sides; the latter are not only placed in easily defensible positions but have the added protection of high walls and terraces. These fortified sites (tinamit) are strategically placed so as to protect valleys where [the common] people lived and grew their crops. The valley of Rabinal (to the south and east of the Cuchumatanes) was protected by Chuitinamit, Cahyup, and Pichec; the valley of Sacapulas by Chuitinamit, Chutixtiox, Xolpacol, and Pacot. These sites were surely used as places of refuge as well as religious centers. In some ways they might be compared to the castles of the Middle Ages in Europe, where in time of enemy attack the villagers of the neighbourhood sought safety.

Distinct both spatially and socially from the tinamit were the amag. The amag, a Quiché word meaning "vicinage or outlying districts", were dispersed forms of settlement which were indigenous to highland Guatemala prior to the impact of Mexicanisation and the establishment of tinamit dwelling for the religious and military elite. Amag were overwhelmingly the abode of the common people. The Dominican priest Francisco Ximénez, writing in the eighteenth century about life in Guatemala before the Spanish conquest, has left a memorable description of the amag and its relationship to the tinamit:

> [The amag] is a small town extended like the legs of a spider from which they take the similitude to give it this name, as if we were to say hamlet; and [it is used] to differentiate it from the "cabecera" or towns which were inhabited by lords, and which were called tinamit, which means, city or court.[84]

Despite the widespread trend towards religio-military nucleation in the form of the tinamit, the amag remained the dominant form of settlement for the common majority who lived in outlying rural areas. The tinamit-amag complex found throughout highland Guatemala on the eve of Spanish conquest was thus "a compromise settlement ... in which members of the ruling strata resided in town centers (tinamit) near the temples, while members of the lower strata stretched out over the countryside in small hamlets (amag) or in other units".[85]

The basic social distinction reflected in the tinamit-amag pattern of settlement is only part of the complex social fabric of late pre-Hispanic life. Carmack has recently established that the Quiché of Gumarcaah had a social structure which was "a complicated integration of rank, descent, territoriality, hierarchy, and quadrachotomies".[86] Assuming that the Indian peoples of the Cuchumatanes had a form of social organisation similar to the Quiché of Gumarcaah, a fundamental division existed between the lords and their vassals.

The lords were concerned with political, military, and religious affairs; the vassals were humble subjects who laboured, provided, and fought for their masters. The lords were sacred, received tribute (in goods, labour, and wives), dressed in fine woven cloths of coloured cotton, and lived in elaborate palaces within the confines of the *tinamit*; the vassals were secular, payers of tribute, dressed in simple henequen cloths, and lived in rudimentary huts amidst the cornfields of the *amag*. In between lords and vassals was a middle stratum consisting of warriors, merchants, and artisans. At Gumarcaah there was also a serf caste who worked the lands of the lords and, like the vassals, were tribute payers. A caste of slaves was entirely beholden to the lords.[87]

These social divisions existed within a larger, more subtle framework which involved a system of ranked lineages. Broadly, a distinction can be made between noble and commoner lineages. Specific high-ranking noble lineages were associated with certain political or military offices, while low-ranking commoner lineages were denied access to any such offices and were engaged primarily in providing tribute in times of peace and military service in times of war. Territorially, noble and commoner lineages were grouped together to form rural estates known as *chinamit* which bore the name of the highest-ranked lineage. Several *chinamit* collectively constituted larger units known as *calpul* which appear to have been traditional social and territorial entities of considerable antiquity.[88]

It is likely that upon their arrival in the Cuchumatanes the Spaniards found throughout the region a socio-spatial organisation which was similar to that of the Quiché of Gumarcaah. Several parts of the Cuchumatanes had, for most of the fifteenth century, been under the political hegemony of Gumarcaah and had been governed by an implanted Quiché elite who, possibly in conjunction with the leaders of the subjugated peoples, exercised control over the common majority. Quiché domination in the Cuchumatán region had long since lapsed when the Spaniards arrived, but presumably the influence of the Mexicanised expeditionaries of Gumarcaah prevailed in a Quichean-derived style of socio-political organisation. It was left to the imperial forces led by Gonzalo de Alvarado, who initiated the Spanish military conquest of the Cuchumatanes in 1525, to usher in an era of radical social, political, and cultural change which far surpassed anything the peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands had experienced under the rule of the Quiché of Gumarcaah.

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

[1] O. La Farge, Santa Eulalia: The Religion of a Cuchumatán Indian Town, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. x. This book was not published until 1947; but like most of La Farge's work, the data pertain to the late 1920s and early 1930s when La Farge spent at least three field seasons in the Cuchumatanes.

[2] R.B. Woodbury and A.S. Trik, The Ruins of Zaculeu, Guatemala, (Richmond: United Fruit Company, 1953).

[3] A.L. Smith and A.V. Kidder, Excavations at Nebaj, Guatemala, (Washington: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1951).

[4] P. Becquelin, Archaeologie de la Region de Nebaj, (Paris: Memoires de L'Institut de'Ethnologie, No. 2, 1969).

[5] Territorially defined, Mesoamerica includes Mexico south of the Lerma-Panuco drainage; all of the present-day republics of Guatemala and El Salvador; the self-governing colony of British Honduras, nowadays Belize; and the western extents of the republic of Honduras to an approximate boundary formed by the Ulúa River and Lake Yojoa. See W.T. Sanders and B.J. Price, Mesoamerica: The Evolution of a Civilization, (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 6. The same authors, pp. 6-14, present a concise cultural definition of Mesoamerica.

[6] R. Gruhn and A.L. Bryan, "Los Tapiales: A Paleo-Indian Campsite in The Guatemalan Highlands", Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 121, No. 3, June 1977, pp. 258-259.

[7] J.E. Kelly, Pedro de Alvarado: Conquistador, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932), p. 139. The reference is contained in the first of Alvarado's two surviving letters to Cortés in Mexico City, written about April 10, 1524.

[8] S.F. Borhegyi, "Archaeological Synthesis of the Guatemalan Highlands", Handbook of Middle American Indians, Vol. 2, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), pp. 6-7.

[9] Sanders and Price, op. cit., p. 24.

[10] Borhegyi, op. cit., pp. 7-18.

[11] Sanders and Price, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[12] Borhegyi, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-41.

[13] Sanders and Price, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[14] Borhegyi, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[15] Borhegyi, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[16] Borhegyi, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-56.

[17] Borhegyi, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[18] R.M. Carmack, *Toltec Influence on the Postclassic Culture History of Highland Guatemala*, (New Orleans: Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, Pub. No. 26, 1968), pp. 59-64.

[19] The manuscript copy of the second edition of the *Diccionário Geográfico de Guatemala* is currently housed in Dr. Francis Gall's office at the Instituto Geográfico Nacional, Guatemala City. Dr. Gall kindly gave me permission to use this encyclopaedic document, but was unable to comment on when his *magnum opus* would be available in published form.

[20] A. Recinos, *Monografía del Departamento de Huehuetenango*, (Guatemala:Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1954), pp. 417-418. Recinos' information on the Chaculá region is derived from the much earlier investigations of the German scholar Eduard Seler, whose archaeological reconnaissance of northwestern Huehuetenango is contained in an address given to the Twelfth Session of the International Congress of Americanists in Paris in 1900 entitled *Die Alten Ansiedelungen von Chaculá*, or *The Old Towns of Chaculá*. Seler infers contact between the settlements of Chaculá and the Classic Lowland Maya centres to the north and east on the grounds of similarity of pottery and stelae styles:

> [The stelae of the Chaculá region] are very important pieces because they are the exact counterparts of the stelae or columns of Copán and Quiriguá, proving that the ancient inhabitants of Chaculá were part of the same civilisation as the tribes that created these great monuments, rightly famous throughout the world. But the inhabitants of Chaculá, poorer and more primitive, were obliged to work with a [limestone] material which could not compare

> with the beautiful, volcanic rock worked by the sculptors of Copán and Quiriguá. But one sees on these two [stelae] pillars the same glyphs, beginning with the calligraphic sign for the Katun, the cycle of twenty times three hundred and sixty days, that one sees on the stelae of Copán and Quiriguá ....

The "Old Towns of Chaculá" are among the best preserved of many pre-Hispanic Cuchumatán sites worthy of further and more intensive archaeological investigation.

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[21] R.M. Carmack, The Documentary Sources, Ecology and Culture History of the Prehispanic Quiché Maya of Guatemala, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: University of California-Los Angeles, 1965), p. 263.

[22] J.W. Fox, Quiché Conquest: Centralism and Regionalism in Highland Guatemalan State Development, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), p. 151.

[23] These architectural features are among those considered diagnostic of "Mexican influence" by A.L. Smith in Archaeological Reconnaissance in Central Guatemala, (Washington: Carnegie Institute of Washington, Publication 608, 1955).

[24] R.M. Carmack, Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic and Archaeological Sources, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1973), p. 68 provides a summary of the Título Mam.

[25] R. Acuña, "Título de los Señores de Sacapulas", Folklore Americas, Vol. 28, No. 1, June 1968, pp. 1-37.

[26] A. Recinos, Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950). This edition is an English translation by D. Goetz and S.G. Morley.

[27] Carmack (1973), op. cit., pp. 265-345 contains a bibliographic study and both the Quiché text and an English translation of the Título C'oyoi.

[28] The Quichean documents known as the Títulos Nijaib Historia Quiché de Don Juan de Torres, Testamento de los Xpantzay and Título de los Indios de Santa Clara are included in A. Recinos, Crónicas Indígenas de Guatemala, (Editorial Universitaria: Guatemala, 1957).

[29] Rabinal Achi: Ballet Drama de los Indios Quiches de Guatemala, translated by L. Cardoza y Aragón, (Mexico, 1972).

[30] Carmack (1973), op. cit., pp. 11-13, and Acuña, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

[31] See, for example, M.A. Smith, Picture Writing from Ancient Southern Mexico: Mixtec Place Signs and Maps, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973).

[32] Ximénez, quoted in Recinos (1950), op. cit., p. 24.

[33] Carmack (1973), op. cit., pp. 19-20.

[34] Carmack (1968), op. cit., pp. 62-70.

[35] J.W. Fox, "Quiché Expansion Processes: Differential Ecological Growth Bases Within An Archaic State", in D.T. Wallace and R.M. Carmack (eds.), Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the Central Quiché, (Albany: State University of New York, Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, Publication No. 1, 1977), pp. 83-85. The subjugation of the Wukamak is eloquently described in the Popol Vuh, (Recinos, 1950, op. cit., pp. 194-204).

[36] Recinos (1950), op. cit., pp. 215-217.

[37] R.M. Carmack, "Ethnohistory of the Central Quiché: The Community of Utatlán", in D.T. Wallace and R.M. Carmack (eds.), op. cit., p. 5.

[38] Recinos (1950), op. cit., p. 228, and Carmack (1977), op. cit., p. 6.

[39] Fox (1977), op. cit., p. 86.

[40] The name "Zaculeu" means "white earth" in the Quiché tongue. The Mam people themselves referred to Zaculeu as Chinabajul which translates roughly as "in the hole of the shrewd or distrustful mole". Cf. Carmack (1965), op. cit., p. 242 and J.L. Arriola, El Libro de las Geonímias de Guatemala, (Guatemala: Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca, 1973), pp. 166-167.

[41] Woodbury and Trik, op. cit., p. 284.

[42] Woodbury and Trik, op. cit., p. 16.

[43] Woodbury and Trik, *op*. *cit*., p. 17.

[44] Recinos (1950), *op*. *cit*., pp. 220-221.

[45] Carmack (1973), *op*. *cit*., p. 297.

[46] Recinos (1957), *op*. *cit*., pp. 141-145 and D.J. Chonay, *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*(trans. by D. Goetz), (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 188.

[47] *Título de los Caniles*, quoted in Carmack (1965), *op*. *cit*., p. 247.

[48] Fox (1977), *op*. *cit*., p. 87; and Fox (1978), *op*. *cit*., p. 112. Recinos (1953), *op*. *cit*., pp. 54 and 76 mentions the mining of gold and silver at Pichiquil, about twelve kilometres to the east of Aguacatán. Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz, writing in 1768 to 1770, also records gold mines operating in the vicinity of Sacapulas. Cf. P. Cortés y Larraz, *Descripción Geografía Moral de la Diocesis de Goathemala*, (Guatemala: Sociedad de Geografía e Historia, 1958), p. 41. Also to the east of Aguacatán was the settlement of Chalchitán, meaning "place of emeralds".

[49] Carmack (1965), *op*. *cit*., p. 293.

[50] Martín Alonso Tovilla, *Relación Historica Descriptíva de las Provincias de la Verapaz y de la del Manché*, (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1960), p. 218.

[51] Carmack (1973), *op*. *cit*., pp. 44-46.

[52] *Rabinal Achi*, *op*. *cit*., p. 35.

[53] Carmack (1975), *op*. *cit*., pp. 247-248.

[54] Fox (1978), *op. cit*., pp. 74, 79, 85 and 82; and Fox (1977), *op*. *cit*., p. 87.

[55] Fox (1977), *op*. *cit*., p. 87.

[56] *Título C'oyoi*, in Carmack (1973), *op*. *cit*., pp. 298-299.

[57] Carmack (1968), *op*. *cit*., p. 77.

[58] Recinos (1950), op. cit., p. 228.

[59] Carmack (1968), op. cit., p. 77.

[60] Recinos (1950), op. cit., p. 228.

[61] Nijaib, in Carmack (1968), op. cit., p. 77.

[62] Las Casas, cited in Carmack (1968), op. cit., p. 77.

[63] Recinos (1957), op. cit., pp. 78-79.

[64] Recinos (1957), op. cit., p. 175.

[65] Fox (1978), op. cit., p. 111.

[66] Fox (1978), op. cit., p. 112.

[67] Carmack (1968), op. cit., p. 78.

[68] Carmack (1968), op. cit., p. 78.

[69] Carmack (1968), op. cit., pp. 79-80.

[70] Recinos (1957), op. cit., pp. 472-474.

[71] Fox (1978), op. cit., p. xi.

[72] O. La Farge and D. Byers, The Year Bearer's People, (New Orleans: Tulane University Middle American Research Series Publication No. 3, 1931), pp. 7 and 195.

[73] La Farge and Byers, op. cit., p. 199.

[74] A. Recinos (trans.), The Annals of the Cakchiquels, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 17; and Carmack (1965), op. cit., p. 312.

[75] Fox (1978), op. cit., p. 176.

[76] Recinos (1957), op. cit., p. 179; and Fox (1978), op. cit., pp. 106-107.

[77] Carmack, op. cit., p. 310.

[78] Woodbury and Trik, op. cit., p. 10.

[79] M.J. MacLeod, Spanish Central America: A Socio-economic History (1520-1720), (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 37.

[80] Smith, op. cit., p. 15.

[81] Fox (1978), op. cit., p. 151.

[82] Smith, op. cit., pp. 16-21.

[83] Carmack (1968), op. cit., p. 81.

[84] F. Ximénez, Historia de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapa y Guatemala, quoted in Carmack (1968), op. cit., p. 81.

[85] Carmack (1968), op. cit., p. 83. That a spatial dichotomy of a general "centre-periphery" nature existed in the settlement arrangement is further attested by specific references in the ethnohistorical sources. The Popol Vuh tells of Quicab conquering "the fields and the towns", (Recinos, 1950, op. cit., pp. 221 and 228), while the Annals of the Cakchiquels records this same conquest as the taking of "all the small towns and the large towns, the country as well as the cities", (Recinos, 1953, op. cit., p. 91).

[86] Carmack (1977), op. cit., p. 6.

[87] Carmack (1977), op. cit., pp. 6-9.

[88] Carmack (1977), op. cit., pp. 10-13. The links between lineage and territory are crucial to an understanding of man-land relationships in pre-Conquest times. At the moment, however, no information of this kind exists for the Cuchumatanes and therefore must be considered a necessary objective of future research. Until this matter, and several others related to it, are thoroughly investigated, perhaps a fruitful procedure is to extrapolate cautiously, as has been done in this chapter, from the work of Carmack and his associates in the Quichean area. There are considerable risks involved in such an exercise, not least because some scholars are wary of the trust Carmack places in certain documentary sources. Professor Ruth Gruhn, for example, is critical of "Carmack's literal interpretation of the Popol Vuh" and suggests that "claims to original Toltec ancestry by Quiché

... lineages were likely [made] only to legitimize the regime" (Gruhn, personal communication).

Support for Gruhn's position on this particular issue can be found in J. Rounds, "The Role of the Tecuhtli in Ancient Aztec Society", Ethnohistory, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1977, pp. 343-361. Rather than regarding "a superimposed Toltec ruling class as a separate group of foreigners who wrested control from the indigenous leaders", Rounds favours the view that "the members of the emerging ruling class [tecuhtli, plural tetecuhtin] were not seen ... as foreigners, but as the legitimate descendents of the traditional elite families". According to Rounds "the office of tecuhtli was widespread early in the history of central Mesoamerica, and was found in most localities prior to the trend toward regional centralisation initiated by the imperial states of the 14th and 15th centuries. Local tetecuhtin came to claim descent from the Toltec dynasties either through spurious, mythological generalogies [sic] or, in most cases, through intermarriage with authentic Toltec lines that introduced the sacred blood in a sufficiently rich mix to claim divine favour. The kinship among regional elites is then viewed as a result not of imposition of a foreign ruling class upon local political structures, but as the product of strategic intermarriages among existing power figures intended to reinforce their local authority through both the symbolic legitimation of Toltec blood and the military force of widespread alliances. Thus ... the persons who formed the core of the emerging ruling class were seen emically not as the offspring of foreigners but as the heirs of the traditional leaders with an added claim to legitimacy".

Only with the formulation and testing of such hypotheses in a specifically Cuchumatán setting will the pre-Conquest history of the region progress, to use the term of La Farge, beyond a status of "guesswork" to one of greater academic credibility.

CHAPTER THREE

CONQUEST AND SUBJUGATION BY IMPERIAL SPAIN

> From the moment ... I put my men in order, and went out to give them battle with ninety horsemen ... we commenced to crush them and scatter them in all directions, and followed them in pursuit for two leagues and a half until all of them were routed and nobody left in front of us. Later we returned against them, and our friends and the infantry made the greatest destruction in the world .... That day we killed and imprisoned many people.
>
> Pedro de Alvarado (1524)

Introduction

Wars waged between groups for the control of mutually desired lands and peoples inevitably carry dramatic and far-reaching implications, particularly for defeated and vanquished factions. The Spanish conquest of Guatemala in the sixteenth century was no exception. Subjugation by Spain was a traumatic experience for the Indian peoples of Guatemala, more so because disruptions wrought by military confrontation were reinforced for centuries thereafter by the operation of Spanish-promoted forces which profoundly altered the nature of Indian life. Specific geographical consequences of the Spanish conquest of the Cuchumatán highlands are discussed at length in subsequent chapters. The purpose of the present chapter is to reconstruct the chronology of Spanish penetration and domination in the region, not merely to serve as historical narrative but more importantly to give some impression of spatial variation in the pattern of conquest--some areas were significantly more difficult to subjugate and control than others. Fundamental to the reconstruction is an appreciation of the extent and degree of Indian resistance to European invasion, an appreciation which is of vital importance with respect to estimates later made of the size of the Cuchumatán population at Spanish contact.

The Spanish Conquest of Guatemala (1524-1541)

The Spanish conquest of Guatemala began with the entrada of Pedro de Alvarado in February, 1524. Instructed by his commanding officer, Hernán Cortés, to verify reports of the existence of "many rich and splendid lands inhabited by new and different races",[1] Alvarado had left Mexico for Guatemala on December 6, 1523, with an army which included 120 cavalry, 300 infantry, and several hundred Mexican auxiliaries from Cholula and Tlaxcala.[2] Alvarado met with no appreciable native resistance on his march down the sparsely settled Pacific coast. Only after a difficult ascent of the pass near Santa María de Jesus, "so rough that the horses could scarcely climb",[3] did the Spanish expeditionary force enter the densely populated Guatemalan highlands and meet with stubborn Indian opposition. The most decisive confrontation took place early in 1524 when the invading Spaniards met the warriors of the Quiché nation on the broad plains where the city of Quezaltenango now stands.

The Quiché had unsuccessfully tried to forge an alliance with the Cakchiquel and the Tzutuhil peoples and thus present the European invaders with a united Indian challenge. The refusal of the Cakchiquel and the Tzutuhil to join ranks with a mutual enemy meant that the Quiché confronted the Spaniards with a force drawn entirely from their own people. Despite being shunned by the Cakchiquel and the Tzutuhil, the Quiché nonetheless had a distinct numerical advantage over the Spaniards. Although greatly outnumbered, a combination of astute tactics and a superior military apparatus resulted in an impressive Spanish victory. The physical and psychological impact of cavalry on a people who had never before seen a horse was as devastating as the material superiority of steel and firearms over the bow and arrow. After a long and bloody battle, during which Alvarado himself killed the Quiché ruler Tecun Uman in man-to-man combat, the Quiché surrendered.[4]

After laying down arms, the Quiché invited the Spaniards to their capital, Utatlán (Gumarcaah), allegedly to discuss the terms of subjugation. At Utatlán, a last desperate effort was made by the Quiché to escape defeat. A plot was devised whereby the Spaniards were to be lured into the confines of the capital. Once inside, the man-made causeway forming the principal approach to the city was to be destroyed, thus trapping Alvarado, his soldiers, and the much-feared horses. Both city and foe would then be set on fire. On entering the half-deserted Utatlán, resembling more "a robber's stronghold than a city",[5] the wary Spaniards sensed a conspiracy and retreated hastily back across the causeway to safety. Suspicions of the plot were confirmed when Indian warriors on the plain outside the city openly renewed hostilities. Alvarado then ordered his soldiers to fall on the Quiché without mercy. Utatlán was laid to waste, and the rulers responsible for conspiring against the Spaniards burned to death. In complete disarray the Quiché nation collapsed. A crucial primary phase in the Spanish conquest of Guatemala had been effectively, albeit brutally, accomplished.

Following the defeat of the Quiché, the Spaniards turned against other Indian peoples. Whereas the conquest of central Mexico had been executed with a prompt and ruthless efficiency, Spanish subjugation of the Guatemalan highlands was made an arduous, protracted affair by the political fragmentation of the region. Unlike Cortés in Mexico, Alvarado had no single, dominant Indian group to conquer. Rather, a host of small but tenacious groups had to be overcome. Domination of the Quiché was followed by a series of laborious campaigns against the Tzutuhil, the Pocomán, the Mam, the Cakchiquel (initially Spanish allies who revolted in 1526 after suffering two years of abuse at the hands of their foreign masters), the Ixil, the Uspantec, and the Kekchi. The conquests of these and other Indian groups continued throughout the 1520s and well into the 1530s.[6]

The military phase of the Spanish conquest of highland Guatemala may, therefore, perhaps best be regarded as beginning with Alvarado's entrada in 1524 and ending around the time of the conquistador's death in 1541. It thus took almost 20 years, by fire and sword, before the various Indian peoples of highland Guatemala were brought under Spanish rule. During this prolonged period of conquest, several native groups were not only successful in resisting the military forces of imperial Spain; some actually inflicted defeat, albeit momentarily, on the European invaders. Among the Indian groups of Guatemala who offered stubborn opposition to the Spaniards were the peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands.

The Spanish Conquest of the Cuchumatán Highlands (1525-1530)

The Spanish conquest of the Cuchumatán highlands was accomplished between the years 1525 and 1530 by three military campaigns directed chiefly against the Mam, the Ixil, and the Quichean people of Uspantán. The expeditions mounted by the Spaniards precipitated at least seven significant battles with the Indian peoples of the Cuchumatanes. On one occasion, during the initial campaign against the Uspantec in 1529, the Spanish expeditionary force was resoundingly beaten back. Only after bold and bloody resistance did the peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands finally surrender to Spanish domination.

Spanish subjugation of the Cuchumatanes began in 1525 with the expedition led by Gonzalo de Alvarado against the Mam. Gonzalo had been appointed by his brother, Pedro de Alvarado, to conduct the campaign after it was revealed by the Quiché leader, Sequechul, that the abortive plot to burn the Spaniards at Utatlán in 1524 was suggested to Sequechul's father, Chigna Huiucelet, by the Mam ruler Caibil Balam.[7] Sequechul wished to avenge what he considered the unjust execution of his father for purportedly engineering the plot. If Chigna Huiucelet had been burned at the stake for his role in the conspiracy, punishment should also be meted out to Caibil Balam. With this end in mind, Sequechul offered to guide the Spaniards in an expedition against the Mam. To further convince the Spaniards of the desirability of conquest, Sequechul described the territory of the Mam as "great and rich", and assured that "abundant treasure" would be among the spoils of victory.[8] The entreaties of Sequechul met with a favourable response, and preparations were accordingly made for a major entrada.

Gonzalo de Alvarado left Tecpán-Guatemala, the Spaniards' temporary base, for the country of the Mam early in July, 1525, with a party of 40 cavalry, 80 infantry, and 2000 Mexican and Quichean warriors loyal to the Spanish Crown. Assisted by another contingent of several hundred Indians serving as pack bearers, the party proceeded first to Totonicapán, a town on the outskirts of Mam territory which functioned as military and supply headquarters for the campaign. After a brief encampment at Totonicapán, the party proceeded northwards into Mam country. Heavy rains delayed the progress of the entrada, and eight days passed before the expeditionary force arrived at the swollen Río Hondo. The march continued until the invaders reached the plain where the Mam town of Mazatenango stood, near the present settlement of San Lorenzo. The Spaniards attacked, and in less than four hours Mazatenango was taken.[9]

At dawn the following morning, the Spaniards were about to march on Huehuetenango, only three kilometres away, when they were confronted by a Mam army, reported as 5000 strong,[10] from the neighbouring town of Malacatán (now Malacatancito). Already in battle formation, the Malacatecos approached the Spaniards over an open plain. Alvarado immediately ordered his cavalry into action. Those Indians not killed by Spanish lances or trampled to death beneath the horses' hooves were soon dispatched by the infantry who followed in the cavalry's wake. The Indians of Malacatán fought bravely; but when their leader, Canil Acab, fell to a blow from the lance of Gonzalo de Alvarado, the courage of the Malacatecos quickly waned. Native resistance collapsed, and the remaining Indians fled from the field of battle into the surrounding hills. Alvarado then marched unopposed into Malacatán, where only the aged and the sick remained. Delegates of the community later arrived from the mountains with offerings of peace. Alvarado accepted their unconditional surrender and declared them subjects of the King of Spain. The campaign against the Mam had successfully begun.[11]

After a few days rest, the Spaniards marched into Huehuetenango, only to find it completely deserted. Having already received reports of the Spaniards' approach, Caibil Balam had ordered the evacuation of Huehuetenango and had retreated with his forces to the nearby stronghold of Zaculeu. Alvarado sent word to the Mam leader proposing terms for the peaceful capitulation of Zaculeu to the Spaniards:

> Let it be known [to Caibil Balam] that our coming is beneficial for his people because we bring tidings of the true God and Christian Religion, sent by the Pope - the Vicar of Jesus Christ, God and Man - and the Emperor King of Spain, so that you may become Christians peacefully, of your own free will; but should you refuse the peace we offer, then the death and destruction which will follow will be entirely of your own account.[12]

Caibil was not impressed by this choice and left it unanswered. Alvarado gave the Mam leader three days to consider the treaty before ordering his troops to march on Zaculeu.

The task confronting the Spaniards was indeed formidable. Zaculeu exhibited a distinct air of impregnability. Although located on an open plain, the site was surrounded on all but one side by ravines, and further protected by a man-made system of walls and ditches. Inside the stronghold, Caibil had gathered an estimated 6000 warriors, drawn not only from Huehuetenango and Zaculeu, but also from the Mam communities of Cuilco and Ixtahuacán.[13] Although the possession of horses and gunpowder represented a distinct military advantage, the invaders and their Indian allies were still outnumbered by about two to one. Victory would not be easily attained.

As the Spaniards advanced on Zaculeu they were assailed by a shower of arrows and stones. Alvarado decided on a full-scale frontal assault, and ordered his soldiers to attack the fortress at its least impregnable northern entrance. A detachment of Indians who engaged the invaders in the fields forming the northern approach to Zaculeu held their own against the Spanish infantry, but fared much worse against the ensuing waves of cavalry. A batallion of 2000 warriors was dispatched from Zaculeu to rejuvenate the Mam defence, but still the Spaniards lost no ground. Soon the battlefield was strewn with "green crests covered in Mam blood". Realising the futility of further combat, Caibil ordered the Mam back to the safety of the barricaded fortress. Although the Spaniards had not succeeded in penetrating beyond the north wall of Zaculeu, Alvarado declared victory, and consolidated his position by laying siege to the stronghold.[14]

Shortly after initiating the siege, the Spaniards were forced to return to the field of battle by a massive Mam army descending on the beleaguered Zaculeu from the mountains to the north. This army, reported as 8000 strong,[15] came from the heart of the Cuchumatanes and was comprised of warriors drawn from towns politically aligned with the Mam of Zaculeu. Communities such as San Martín, Todos Santos, Santiago Chimaltenango, and San Juan Atitán probably all contributed a supply of warriors. Leaving a command of men under Antonio de Salazar to maintain the siege of the fortress, Alvarado marched out to attack the fast-approaching Mam relief force. Once again, the Indians were more than a match for the Spanish infantry, but collapsed under the assault of the cavalry. On two occasions, the Zaculeu Mam attempted to break the siege, penetrate the Spanish rear guard, and come to the assistance of their comrades in the field; but Salazar's men stood firm and succeeded in holding them back. Besieged in his stronghold, Caibil Balam could only watch as Gonzalo de Alvarado's well-disciplined and seasoned troops annihilated the courageous but disorganised and ill-equipped Mam warriors. After leading his forces to a decisive victory, Alvarado returned to Zaculeu to continue the siege.[16]

The siege of Zaculeu, begun in early September, lasted until the middle of October before the Mam showed signs of capitulating. During this time very little food reached the fortress from the surrounding agricultural communities, most of which had earlier fallen into the invaders' hands. A lack of provisions and a falling morale left the Mam weak, sick, and hungry. At one point during the siege, the invaders' own supplies were almost exhausted. Indian auxiliaries resorted to eating the horses killed in battle, but the Spaniards themselves held out until a shipment of food arrived from the Lieutenant General of the Province of Quiché, Juan de León Cardoma. When the weeping Caibil Balam finally surrendered, it was not until the Mam of Zaculeu had reached the point of starvation. After accepting Caibil's surrender, Alvarado ordered a reconaissance to be made of all the towns subject to Zaculeu, and established a Spanish garrison in nearby Huehuetenango under the command of Gonzalo de Solis. Satisfied that the subjugation of the Mam had now been successfully accomplished, Alvarado returned to Tecpán-Guatemala with news of his hard-earned victory.[17]

With the fall of Zaculeu to the expeditionary force of Gonzalo de Alvarado in October, 1525, the western reaches of the Cuchumatanes came under Spanish domination. Two eastern enclaves, however, remained unassimilated: the country of the Ixil and that of their allies, the Uspantec. For four years after the conquest of the Mam, these two areas were considered too isolated and insignificant to warrant immediate Spanish attention. Increasing harassment of Spanish forces by the warriors of Uspantán, plus the constant efforts of the Uspantecos to incite an uprising among the already vanquished southern Quiché, eventually convinced the Spaniards that an entrada into these remote and troublesome parts was necessary.

The first entrada into the eastern Cuchumatanes consisted of 60 Spanish infantry and 300 Indian auxiliaries under the command of Gaspar Arias, an alcalde ordinario of the city of Guatemala.[18] This small expeditionary force, by the beginning of September, 1529, had managed to bring the Ixil towns of Nebaj and Chajul under temporary Spanish control. They then marched eastwards towards Uspantán. Shortly before reaching this Uspantec stronghold, Arias received word that he had been deposed of his position of alcalde ordinario by Francisco de Orduña, the acting governor of Guatemala. Arias returned immediately to the capital, leaving Pedro de Olmos in charge of completing the mission. Against the advice of his officers, the inexperienced Olmos rashly decided to storm Uspantán in a full-scale frontal assault. The decision proved disastrous. No sooner had the Spaniards attacked when 2000 Uspantecos ambushed them from the rear. The invaders were completely routed and suffered heavy losses. Many Indian auxiliaries were killed in battle, while others were captured alive and later put to death on the sacrificial altar of the Uspanteco god Exbalamquen. The survivors of the expedition, defeated and exhausted, fought their way back to the safety of the Spanish garrison at Utatlán, where they complained bitterly of Olmos' suicidal attack.[19]

About a year after this unsuccessful entrada, the Spaniards mounted a second expedition against the Ixil and the Uspantec. Under the command of Francisco de Castellanos, "a man of courage and brave spirit",[20] this expedition was notably stronger than the first. Castellanos left the city of Guatemala (Ciudad Vieja) for the eastern Cuchumatanes with a party consisting of eight corporals, 32 cavalry, 40 infantry, and 400 Indian auxiliaries. Following a brief rest at Chichicastenango, the expedition marched seven leagues north to Sacapulas. After a difficult crossing of the Río Negro, the Spaniards began a slow ascent of the steep, southern ranges of the Cuchumatanes. On reaching the upper slopes, Castellanos' troops came upon an army of 4000-5000 "rebellious and ferocious" warriors from Nebaj and other neighbouring towns.[21]

After a long and bloody battle at the summit, the Spanish cavalry eventually outflanked the Indians and forced them to retreat to their stronghold at Nebaj, "isolated and protected on all sides by a deep ravine".[22] There the Indians made a final stand. The failure of the Ixil to defend adequately all sides of the Nebaj fortress enabled several Indian auxiliaries to scramble over the ravine, scale the stronghold's walls, and gain entry. Once inside, they set the town on fire. In the resulting chaos, the Spaniards broke through the main defence at the entrance to the stronghold after many warriors had left their position to fight the fire. The invaders soon emerged victorious. Ixil warriors who were not killed during the fighting were rounded up. The next day Castellanos ordered that all captives were to be branded as slaves as punishment for their resistance. When news of the fall of Nebaj reached the people of Chajul, they surrendered to the Spaniards without contest.[23]

Following the capture of Nebaj and the capitulation of Chajul, the Spanish expeditionary force marched eastwards once again towards Uspantán. Castellanos' troops arrived at the town to find 10,000 Indian warriors, drawn from Uspantán, Cunén, Cotzal, Sacapulas, and Verapaz, waiting in hostile confrontation. The Spaniards had barely established a position in front of the Uspantec stronghold when the Indians attacked. Although greatly outnumbered, Castellanos' strategic deployment of cavalry, plus the firearm superiority of his foot soldiers, finally won the day for the Spaniards. Uspantán was seized; and, as at Nebaj, those warriors not slaughtered on the field of battle were taken prisoner and branded as slaves. After ensuring that the various towns allied with the Uspantec also capitulated, Castellanos returned to the capital.[24]

The successful subjugation of Uspantán, accomplished during the final days of December, 1530, concluded the all important military phase of Spanish conquest in the Cuchumatán highlands. The three expeditions mounted by the Spaniards against the native peoples of the Cuchumatanes resulted in at least seven major battles and many skirmishes between Spanish and Indian forces. The ability of Indian communities to raise strong armies to oppose the Spanish entradas of 1525 to 1530 is an important indication that the Cuchumatán region on the eve of conquest supported a population of considerable magnitude.

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

[1] H. Cortés, Five Letters of Cortés to the Emperor, (New York: Norton, 1962), translated by J.B. Morris, p. 268.

[2] B. Díaz del Castillo, Historia de la Conquista de Nueva España, (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1970), p. 410. Díaz del Castillo states that Cortés also charged Alvarado "to endeavor to bring the people to peace without waging war on them, and to preach matters concerning our holy faith by means of certain interpreters and clergymen [Alvarado] took with him".

[3] P. de Alvarado, An Account of the Conquest of Guatemala in 1524, (New York: The Cortés Society, 1924), edited and translated by Sedley J. Mackie, p. 56.

[4] D. Juarros, A Statistical and Commercial History of the Kingdom of Guatemala in Spanish America, (London: J. Hearne, 1823), translated by J. Baily, pp. 387-393. Juarros has an interesting summary of Alvarado's campaign against the Quiché, from the Spaniards' first penetration of the Guatemalan highlands until their victory at Xelahuh (Quezaltenango):

> ... in short, from the River Zamalá (Samalá) to the Olintepeque, a series of 6 actions took place, in all of which the Indians were defeated with great slaughter: of these, that [battle] fought in the defile of the latter river was the most desperate and bloody; the stream was reddened with the carnage of the wretched Indians, and from that time its name was changed for the significant one of Xiquigel, or the River of Blood ....

[5] Alvarado, op. cit., p. 63.

[6] T.T. Veblen, "Native Population Decline in Totonicapán, Guatemala", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 1977, pp. 491-492.

[7] F.A. de Fuentes y Guzmán, Recordación Florida, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Tomo CCLIX, 1972), p. 56; and H.H. Bancroft, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft: The History of Central America, Vol. VI, (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1883), p. 695.

[8] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op*. *cit*., p. 56.

[9] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op*. *cit*., pp. 56-57; and Bancroft, *op*. *cit*., pp. 696-697.

[10] N.F.S. Woodbury, "The History of Zaculeu", in R.B. Woodbury and A.S. Trik, *The Ruins of Zaculeu, Guatemala*, (Richmond: United Fruit Company, 1953), p. 14, incorrectly states that the Spaniards were attacked by "Five hundred armed Indians". This may be either a misprint or a misinterpretation. The primary source, Fuentes y Guzmán (*op*. *cit*., p. 58) clearly records that the Indian force numbered not five hundred but five thousand: "... reconocieren a acercárles por la llanura cinco mil indios armados que marchaban en regulada disciplina y militar disposición ...".

[11] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op*. *cit*., pp. 58-60; and Bancroft, *op*. *cit*., pp. 697-699.

[12] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op*. *cit*., p. 63. The terms proposed by Gonzalo de Alvarado to Caibil Balam were those of the *Requerimiento*, or Requirement. The *Requerimiento* was a document drawn up with a view to placing the Spanish conquest on a firm legal ground. Drafted on royal order shortly before 1514 by Juan López de Palacios Rubios, a Spanish juridical expert, the *Requerimiento* was a summary of the history of Christianity from the Biblical creation of the world to the concessions granted to imperial Spain by Pope Alexander VI. A copy of the *Requerimiento* was carried by every *conquistador* and was read aloud to beligerent Indians prior to the commencement of battle. The *Requerimiento* called upon Indians to recognise the authority of the church, the Pope, and the monarch. By reading the *Requerimiento* before waging war, the Spanish *conquistadores* considered themselves absolved from any responsibility of action. In fact, if the terms of the *Requerimiento* were not met, responsibility for the ensuing battle was laid solely on the heads of the Indians resisting the Spaniards on their "divine mission". To a people as legalistically minded as sixteenth-century Spaniards, the *Requerimiento* thus served as a definition of "just warfare". Cf., C. Gibson, *Spain in America*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 38-40.

[13] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op*. *cit*., p. 63. Fuentes y Guzman's account of the Spanish conquest of the Mam, written in the late seventeenth century, was based on a report written by the *conquistador* Gonzalo de Alvarado in the early sixteenth century (c. 1525). Alvarado's original missive is unfortunately no longer extant.

[14] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op*. *cit*., p. 63; and Bancroft, *op*. *cit*., p. 700.

[15] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 66; and Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 700.

[16] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67; and Bancroft, *op. cit.*, pp. 700-701.

[17] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-71. The chronicler gives no information about the fate of Caibil Balam after the fall of Zaculeu. Whether or not the Mam who surrendered along with Caibil Balam were branded and held as slaves is also not specified, although this was likely the case.

[18] The position *alcalde ordinario* of Guatemala means that Gaspar Arias was a member of the municipal council of the city of Guatemala. The "city" referred to was the first "permanent" capital of Guatemala, founded in 1527 in the Valley of Almolonga, known today simply as Ciudad Vieja. This settlement was destroyed by flood and earthquake on September 10, 1541, whereupon the Spaniards moved the capital a league and a half away to a site in the valley of Panchoy.

[19] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20; and Bancroft, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-110.

[20] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[21] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 21; and Bancroft, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 111-112.

[22] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[23] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 21; and Bancroft, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 112.

[24] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22; and Bancroft, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 112-113.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CUCHUMATAN POPULATION AT SPANISH CONTACT

> The invasion of a New World
> by another world which had
> been isolated from it may
> well have caused the greatest
> destruction of lives in history.
>
> (Murdo J. MacLeod, 1973)

> The pursuit of man as a quantity
> in America in 1492 will surely
> continue to be lively, and along
> the way valuable insights will
> be attained quite beyond the
> calculation of original numbers.
>
> (William M. Denevan, 1976)

The debate concerning the size of the indigenous population of the New World in the years immediately prior to European conquest and colonisation has long generated heated discussion.[1] A dichotomy of opinion exists between those scholars who claim that the aboriginal inhabitants of the Americas were few in number and those who claim that the native population was prodigious.[2] Related to the controversy of population size is the issue of the demographic decline which followed the coming of the Europeans. The proponents of a large pre-Columbian population maintain that there was a catastrophic decrease in Indian numbers after European invasion. Conversely, the proponents of a small pre-Columbian population reject the idea of a massive numerical collapse.[3] Although the matter is not entirely settled, the balance of scholarship points increasingly in favour of those who claim that aboriginal America was densely populated and that the Indian peoples of the New World declined substantially in number after contact with the invading Europeans.[4]

Despite the fact that the historical demography of highland Guatemala is still in its infancy, an important study by Thomas Veblen has convincingly demonstrated that the Totonicapán area was thickly peopled during late pre-Columbian times and that the Indian population of the region decreased dramatically in size in the years following conquest by Spain.[5] Veblen, from a careful interpretation of the documentary sources, suggests that the late pre-Hispanic population of Totonicapán may have numbered as much as the mid-twentieth century population of the region. He also attributes the substantial post-Conquest demographic collapse of Totonicapán primarily to the devastating impact of an array of Old World diseases on an immunologically defenseless Indian population. Veblen's study of native population decline in Totonicapán is of crucial importance to the present work because it provides a relevant frame of reference. Any scholarly work involving conjecture and extrapolation will necessarily profit from valid regional comparison.

The estimate of the contact population of Totonicapán, based entirely on historical sources, calls immediately into question the authenticity of the contemporary testimony, particularly sixteenth-century eyewitness accounts by the Spanish conquerors. There is no better summary of the polemics of this issue than the following statement of Cook and Borah:

> Much of our information on Indian population in the years immediately preceding and following the Conquest comes from the conquerors themselves. Some information represents their efforts to determine the nature of the people and country they were entering. Other information arises incidentally from their reporting of what they did and of the hazards they overcame. Spanish reporting of the period of the Conquest has been impugned on two grounds: First, that the Europeans of the sixteenth century could not handle statistical operations or concepts of larger numbers; second, that all explorers and conquerors in a new land tend to exaggerate. If one reflects upon the complexity of European commercial and administrative techniques in the sixteenth century and upon the variety of motives and the rivalries among explorers and conquerors, a more defensible view would be that the Europeans could count and that a tendency to exaggerate in some would be balanced by a tendency to minimize in others. On the whole, we do better to receive gratefully the fragments that have come down to us and to apply the normal canons of textual examination and comparison.[6]

Perhaps the most suspect data used to derive estimates of pre-Hispanic populations is the size of Indian armies encountered by the Spaniards in the course of conquest. It is constantly alleged that the Spanish conquistadores, in attempts to glorify their military feats, were guilty of grossly exaggerating the size of the Indian forces defeated in battle. This argument ignores the fact that successful conquerors often later became influential administrators and would therefore frequently be charged with tribute assessment for both the Spanish Crown and Spanish colonists. Since population size directly determined the levy of tribute, any conquistador with prospects of one day being responsible for assessing Indian tribute capacity would tend to count with at least some measure of discretion.[7]

Consistent with the view which favours taking contemporary testimony and subjecting it to scholarly scrutiny, Veblen has shown that Spanish estimates of Indian army sizes recorded for Totonicapán correspond reasonably well with data derived from other sources. Most significantly, Veblen claims that the work of the seventeenth-century chronicler Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán, considered by many scholars an unreliable source for pre-Hispanic population data, in fact contains highly plausible figures for Indian army sizes. Veblen explicitly states that "the data available on the size of the pre-Hispanic population of Totonicapán provide no basis for rejecting the demographic information contained in Fuentes y Guzmán".[8] This appraisal is of crucial importance because reports of Indian army sizes are among the few extant historical data which can be used to derive an estimate of the population of the Cuchumatán highlands on the eve of Spanish conquest.

Spanish estimates of the Indian army sizes encountered during the conquest of the Cuchumatanes have been recorded by Fuentes y Guzmán in his monumental *Recordación Florida*. Fuentes y Guzmán's source for the conquest of the Mam was a document, now unfortunately lost, written by the *conquistador* Gonzalo de Alvarado after the successful subjugation of the Mam in 1525. In his account, the chronicler gives no indication of the size of the Indian army which defended Mazatenango (San Lorenzo), but does state that the town "in those days was well-populated".[9] Fuentes y Guzmán's chief sources for the conquest of the Ixil and the Uspantec were the first *Libro de Cabildo*, records of the municipal council of Guatemala, and a collection of documents entitled the *Manuscrito Quiché*. Estimates of the size of the Indian armies which confronted the Spaniards during the *entradas* into the Cuchumatanes, along with the names of towns supplying warriors, are shown in Table 4.

The total number of Indian warriors the Spaniards faced in battle in the Cuchumatanes between 1525 and 1530 was recorded by Fuentes y Guzmán as 34,000. For Totonicapán, Veblen uses a one to four ratio in correlating army size to total population; for the Tlaxcala region of central Mexico, Gibson uses a warriors to total population ratio of one to five.[10] A ratio of one to four, which Veblen considers "conservative", indicates a population of 136,000; a ratio of one to five gives a total of 170,000. An average of these two figures produces a rough estimate of the population of the Cuchumatán highlands between 1525 and 1530 of around 150,000.

TABLE 4

INDIAN ARMY SIZES RECORDED DURING THE BATTLES OF CONQUEST

Date and Place of Battle	Estimated Indian Army Size	Towns Supplying Warriors
1525: Mazatenango (San Lorenzo)	-	Mazatenango
1525: near Mazatenango	5,000	Malacatán
1525: Zaculeu	6,000	Huehuetenango, Zaculeu, Cuilco, and Ixtahuacán
1525: Zaculeu	8,000	Various Cuchumatán communities affiliated with the Mam of Zaculeu
1530: Nebaj	5,000	Nebaj and other towns
1530: Uspantán	10,000	Uspantán, Verapaz towns, Cunén, Cotzal, Sacapulas

Source: F.A. Fuentes y Guzmán, "Recordación Florida".

In the years immediately prior to the Spanish conquest, however, it is likely that Cuchumatán communities were struck by the same deathly epidemic which, in 1520, swept over much of highland Guatemala. This epidemic, possibly a combination of smallpox and pulmonary plague, entered the highlands of Guatemala from Mexico and had a devastating effect on the Indian peoples of the region. Old World in origin and consequently unknown in the Americas until the arrival of the Spaniards, the epidemic decimated the physiologically vulnerable native population and thus reduced both Indian numbers and resistance to military conquest.[11] The ravage of the disease is described in a poignant passage from the Annals of the Cakchiquels:

> It happened that during the twenty-fifth year (1520) the plague began, oh, my sons! First they became ill of a cough, they suffered from nosebleeds and illness of the bladder. It was truly terrible, the number of dead there were in that period .... Little by little heavy shadows and black night enveloped our fathers and grandfathers and us also, oh, my sons! when the plague raged ..., when the plague began to spread .... It was in truth terrible, the number of dead among the people. The people could not in any way control the sickness .... Great was the stench of the dead. After our fathers and grandfathers succumbed, half of the people fled to the fields. The dogs and the vultures devoured the bodies. The mortality was terrible. Your grandfathers died, and with them died the son of the king and his brothers and kinsmen. So it was that we became orphans, oh, my sons! So we became when we were young. All of us were thus. We were born to die![12]

In terms of numerical decline, MacLeod claims that one-third to one-half of the Indian population of highland Guatemala must have perished as a consequence of the epidemic:

> Given present day knowledge of the impact of smallpox or plague on people without previous immunities, it is safe, indeed conservative, to say that a third of the Guatemalan highland populations died during this holocaust.[13]

A Cuchumatán population which in 1525 numbered around 150,000 could, therefore, some five to ten years earlier have numbered as much as 225,000 to 300,000. An average of these two figures produces a population estimate for 1520 of around 260,000. In order to place this estimate in perspective, the population of the Cuchumatanes in 1950 was around 265,000 and in the present day is around 500,000.[14] This means that the population of the Cuchumatán highlands on the eve of Spanish conquest may have been approximately the same size as the mid-twentieth century population of the region. Although this calculation is no more than a tentative estimate based on meagre historical documentation, its credibility is supported by Veblen's estimate of the contact population of Totonicapán as being of roughly the same magnitude as that region's mid-twentieth century population.

An estimate of around 260,000 for the contact population of the Cuchumatán highlands must remain highly speculative until the discovery of substantive documentary sources and intensive archaeological excavation make possible a more reliable numerical appraisal. There is, however, little in the existing historical record to suggest that highland Guatemala as a whole was not densely settled in the years immediately preceding and following conquest by Spain. Pedro de Alvarado, a veteran of the Spanish campaign against the populous native groups of central Mexico, was clearly impressed with the density of Indian settlement in the highlands of Guatemala. In his second letter to Cortés in Mexico, written from the Spanish base of Tecpán-Guatemala on July 28, 1524, Alvarado stated that "this land, so great and so thickly inhabited ... has more people than all the lands that Your Grace has governed up to now".[15] Given the scant nature of document survival for the early sixteenth century (and the even greater scarcity of demographic materials relating to this same period of time) it would be unwise to dismiss entirely the worth of such statements without first having unimpeachable evidence for doing so.

By the end of 1530, Spanish domination over the Indian peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands had been established, albeit with a ruthless show of force on the part of the invaders. The military subjugation of several other parts of highland Guatemala continued well into the 1530s. It was therefore not until about 20 years after the initial _entrada_ of Pedro de Alvarado that conditions in Guatemala were conducive to the introduction of systematic and responsible colonial government.[16] Only in the middle and late 1540s did Spain begin to order and shape the populous native communities of Guatemala into a viable colony.

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

[1] W.M. Denevan (ed.), The Native Population of the Americas in 1492, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), pp. 1-12; W. Borah, "The Historical Demography of Latin America: Sources, Techniques, Controversies, Yields", in P. Deprez (ed.), Population and Economics: Proceedings of Section V of the Fourth Congress of the International Economic History Association, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1970), pp. 173-205; W. Borah, "The Historical Demography of Aboriginal and Colonial America: An Attempt at Perspective", in Denevan, op. cit., pp. 173-205; and T.T. Veblen, "Native Population Decline in Totonicapán, Guatemala", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 67, No. 4, Dec. 1977, pp. 491-492.

[2] Denevan, op. cit., p. 3, summarises the wide ranging estimates. Kroeber (1939) and Rosenblat (1954) estimate the aboriginal population of the Americas in 1492 to have been 8.4 m and 13.4 m respectively. To the contrary, Borah (1964) estimates the contact population of the hemisphere to have been "upwards of one hundred million", a figure which corresponds well with Dobyns (1966) estimate of between 90 m and 112 m.

[3] Borah (1976), in Denevan, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

[4] Denevan, op. cit., p. 1, notes that "as the quality of the research improves, the trend is toward acceptance of higher numbers". The monumental work of Sherburne F. Cook and Woodrow Borah has been of primary significance in establishing a model of large populations at Spanish contact experiencing a rapid and precipitous post-contact decline. The Preface to Volume One of their magnificent three-volume Essays in Population History, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971, 1974, and 1979), pp. V-XIV, serves as a succinct bibliographical and chronological survey of their painstaking years of research. Other works which establish the existence of large pre-Columbian populations and which support the Cook and Borah thesis of massive post-contact collapse include the following: C. Sauer, Colima of New Spain in the Sixteenth Century, Ibero-Americana No. 29, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948), pp. 59-63 and 93-96; W.M. Denevan, The Upland Pine Forests of Nicaragua: A Study in Cultural Plant Geography, University of California Publications in Geography, Vol. 12, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), pp. 289-291; C.L. Johanessen, Savannas of Interior Honduras, Ibero-Americana No. 46, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 27-47; C.O. Sauer, The Early Spanish Main, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University

of California Press, 1966), pp. 65-69; 155-156; 178-181; 200-204; and 283-289; A.W. Crosby, "Conquistador Y Pestilencia: The First New World Pandemic and the Fall of the Great Indian Empires", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 47 (1967), pp. 321-337; P. Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), pp. 22-28; M.J. MacLeod, *Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 37-45; A.W. Crosby, "Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation in America", *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 33, 1976, pp. 289-299; C. Lutz, *Santiago de Guatemala, 1541-1773: The Socio-Demographic History of a Spanish American Colonial City*, (University of Wisconsin-Madison, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1976), pp. 249-317 and 743-752; D. Madigan, *Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala: A Socioeconomic and Demographic History*, (University of Pittsburgh, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1976), pp. 176-206; Veblen, *op. cit.*, pp. 486-494; and P. Gerhard, *The Southeast Frontier of New Spain*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 23-30.

[5] Veblen, *op. cit.*, pp. 484-499.

[6] Cook and Borah, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[7] Veblen, *op. cit.*, pp. 486-487.

[8] Veblen, *op. cit.*, p. 497. Anthropologist Robert Carmack expresses the following support for Fuentes y Guzmán's credibility as a scholarly source:

> The *Recordación Florida* has always been recognized as an important source for the study of the history and culture of early Guatemala, though Fuentes y Guzmán has been severely criticized for his exaggerations, disorganization, confusion and errors of fact, rambling, flowery style, and his obvious bias in favour of the *conquistadores* .... Granting the general validity of these criticisms, it is my considered opinion that Fuentes y Guzmán was a better student of Indian culture than is usually recognized, and that his work is of inestimable importance ....

[R.M. Carmack, *Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Sources*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1973), p. 184.]

[9] F.A. de Fuentes y Guzmán, *Recordación Florida*, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Tomo CCLIX, 1972), p. 57.

[10] Veblen, op. cit., p. 487; and C. Gibson, Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 139.

[11] MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

[12] A. Recinos, The Annals of the Cakchiquels, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), pp. 115-116.

[13] MacLeod, op. cit., p. 41; see also pp. 18-20.

[14] M.M. Urrutia, La División Política y Administrativa de Guatemala, (Guatemala: Editorial Iberia, 1961), Tomo I, pp. 432 and 644; Octavo Censo de Población, (Cifras Definitívas), (Guatemala: Direccion General de Estadistica, 1975), Series III, Vol. 1, pp. 16-18. For statistical convenience, the Cuchumatán highlands are considered as constituting the corporate area of all 31 municipios (townships) of the Department of Huehuetenango plus six municipios of the Department of Quiché, (Chajul, Cunén, Nebaj, Uspantán, and Sacapulas).

[15] P. de Alvarado, An Account of the Conquest of Guatemala in 1524, (New York: The Cortés Society, 1924), edited and translated by Sedley J. Mackie, pp. 86-88.

[16] MacLeod, op. cit., p. 44.

PART THREE

THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS UNDER SPANISH COLONIAL RULE (1541-1821)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF ORDER: CONGREGACION AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF EMPIRE

> We came here to serve God
> and the King, and also to
> get rich.
>
> Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492-1584)

Introduction

The above statement of Díaz del Castillo[1] may not embrace all the reasons which best explain the pattern of Spanish conquest and colonisation in the New World, but his words reflect an awareness of three important forces which did much to shape the fabric of life in the American colonies of Spain: the Church, the State, and the ambition of individuals to attain wealth. Collectively, the Church, the State, and individual conquerors and colonists were responsible for executing a primary objective of Spanish imperial desires: the transfer, establishment, and cultivation of what anthropologist George M. Foster has called "the Spanish way of life". According to Foster, the "Spanish way of life"

> ... was manifest in the character, personality, personal habits, and beliefs of the first conquistadors and the later settlers who went to America. It was manifest, perhaps even more

> sharply, in a philosophy about God, Sovereign, State, and man which was remarkable as much for its effectiveness as a guide to action as for its internal consistency and completeness. This philosophy was instrumental in producing a colonial policy which had as its goal the spiritual and legal conquest of the native peoples of America, the suppression or modification of large parts of their indigenous cultures, and the replacement of aboriginal ways with those characteristics of Spanish culture believed by Church and State to be the most advanced and desirable forms of Spanish life and thought.[2]

The Spanish quest for empire, therefore, aimed at nothing less than the creation in the New World of a utopia modelled on Spanish principles of religion, government, and culture. The failure to create such a utopia in the Caribbean[3] served only to increase the desire of Spain to achieve its lofty goal on the American mainland. By the early 1540s, when the military subjugation of the peoples of highland Guatemala had been successfully accomplished, Spain had already over 50 years' experience as an imperial nation. During this time, two major attempts had been made to design codes of legislation which would bring about an efficient and effective administration of Spanish possessions in the New World. In both the Laws of Burgos of 1512 and the New Laws of 1542, Spanish ideals of order and unity were foremost.[4] One important means of attempting to establish order and unity throughout the lands of the Indies was the policy of congregación or reducción.

Congregación

Congregación or reducción involved the gathering together of scattered Indian communities of often no more than a few families into larger, more centralised towns and villages. "Congregation" or "reduction" of formerly dispersed settlements was undertaken with the view of facilitating the Indians' instruction in Christianity by the evangelising missionaries. At the same time, the policy promoted the task of civil administration by making easier the organisation of such arrangements as the enumeration of the native population, the payment of tribute, and the control of labour. The spiritual aspect of congregación was at an early date loosely incorporated into the Laws of Burgos (1512), but was later given a more explicit emphasis in the Recopilación de las leyes de Indias:

> With great care and particular attention we have always attempted to impose the most convenient means of instructing the Indians in the Holy Catholic Faith and the evangelical law, causing them to forget their ancient erroneous rites and ceremonies and to live in concert and order; and, so that this might be brought about, those of our Council of Indies have met together several times with other religious persons ... and they, with the desire of promoting the service of God, and ours, resolved that the Indians should be reduced to villages and not be allowed to live divided and separated in the mountains and wildernesses, where they are deprived of all spiritual and temporal comforts, the aid of our ministers, and those other things which human necessities oblige men to give one to another; therefore ... the viceroys, presidents, and governors [are] charged and ordered to execute the reduction, settlement, and indoctrination of the Indians ....[5]

The Spanish Crown, in the form of a *cédula real*, called for the initiation of *congregación* in Guatemala as early as 1540,[6] but the royal order was not implemented until several years later. One of the main reasons for the delay in starting *congregación* in Guatemala was the authoritarian hold exercised over such affairs by the *adelantado* Pedro de Alvarado. The title *adelantado*, conferred on Alvarado by King Charles V in 1527, gave its recipient a wide range of powers, none of which he was reluctant to use.[7] Consequently, from about 1530 until his death in 1541 during the Mixton rebellion, Alvarado ruled and exploited Guatemala as if the country were his personal fief. The *conquisitador* and later governor of Guatemala was simply too preoccupied with wielding power and financing ambitious projects to foster the growth of systematic and responsible government.[8] It was therefore not until after Alvarado's death and the dismantling of his impressive private estate that the authorities of the Crown in Guatemala considered it expedient to proceed with the policy of *congregación*.

Towards the end of the 1540s, by order of Licenciado Juan Rogel, the process of *congregación* was initiated throughout the highlands of Guatemala.[9] The policy was enthusiastically led by Bishop Marroquín and the Dominican missionaries, who saw *congregación* as the beginning of the "spiritual conquest" of the Indians. *Congregaciónes* were generally begun by the missionaries first approaching local Indian leaders (*caciques* and *principales*) and encouraging them to approve the site selected for the new town. Engaging the cooperation of local Indian leaders was frequently a key factor in persuading the common majority to leave their old homes in the mountains and migrate to the site of the congregación. Some Indian families left their mountain abodes willingly, on the advice and entreaties of their local leaders. Others left reluctantly, only after the threat of forceful eviction. Once gathered at the new town site, the Indians would plant the surrounding land as milpa. While the corn matured a start was made on various projects. The first priority was the erection of a church, of modest or elaborate proportion, depending on the number of Indian families comprising the congregación. Thereafter, attention was turned to constructing a house for the local priest; to laying out a plaza in front of the church; and to allocating space around the plaza for such buildings as a town hall, a jail, and sleeping quarters where visitors could spend the night. Streets were laid out in a regular grid pattern, running north to south and east to west. By the mid-sixteenth century, a semblance of order had been imposed on the general pattern of Indian settlement. Designed with the goals of Christianisation and economic exploitation foremost in mind, the order inherent in congregación stood in sharp contrast, in Spanish eyes, to the morphological anarchy of the dispersed pattern of settlement characteristic of pre-Conquest times.[10]

An important consideration in the selection of sites for *congregaciones* was the nature of the physical setting. A great many pre-Hispanic settlements were located on remote hilltops, surrounded by ravines and gullies, and were established there during turbulent times more with a view to defence than orderly, peaceful living. The civil and religious authorities responsible for *congregación* usually favoured accessible valley sites, so the process of resettlement involved population movement from isolated, mountain peripheries to central, valley-bottom locations. If a native settlement exhibited site features compatible with the Spanish criteria of open space, access to water, and proximity to agricultural land or enterprises involving the need for Indian labour, then *congregaciones* would be established on or close to these existing settlements. Chiantla and Huehuetenango, for example, were Spanish towns founded near the ancient Mam capital of Zaculeu. It was frequently possible to establish *congregaciones* in which a Catholic church was built on top of, or adjacent to, a native ceremonial complex, thus giving Spanish power over the Indians a strong and overt symbolic expression. According to La Farge, this was likely what occurred in the *congregación* of Jacaltenango.[11]

The process of *congregación* was instrumental in creating a dichotomy in the general pattern of native landholding. As early as 1532, a *cédula real* declared that "the Indians shall continue to possess their lands, both arable tracts and grazing lands, so that they do not lack what is necessary".[12] All *congregaciones*, by law, were entitled to an ejido, an area of communal land not cultivated but used for grazing, hunting, and the gathering of water, firewood, and various products of the forest.[13] In addition to farming land in the vicinity of a congregación, Indian groups brought together often continued to cultivate the lands of their abandoned, but never forgotten, mountain homes.[14] The attachment of displaced Indian families to their ancestral lands was ultimately to modify the pattern of Spanish-imposed settlement in many parts of highland Guatemala.

Congregación in the Cuchumatán Highlands

In compliance with an order issued by Licenciado Pedro Ramírez de Quiñones, one of the Crown's most diligent officers in Guatemala, congregación was begun towards the end of the 1540s throughout the Cuchumatanes. The isolation and ruggedness of much of the Cuchumatán region made congregación difficult; but the Spanish authorities, led by industrious Dominican missionaries, carried out the instructions of Ramírez assiduously.

The majority of Cuchumatán towns in existence today originated as formal centres of settlement in the process of congregación of the mid-sixteenth century. The historical record provides evidence of congregación for a number of towns, including Aguacatán, Chajul, Chiantla, San Juan Cotzal, Cunén, Huehuetenango, Jacaltenango, Nebaj, Petatán, Sacapulas, San Antonio and Santa Ana Huista, San Martín, and Todos Santos Cuchumatán. Much of the information concerning the founding of these towns comes from the Dominican friar Antonio de Remesal who wrote the first colonial history of Guatemala between 1615 and 1617, following a period of study and work in the colony.[15]

Remesal's recording of the operation of congregación is both general and specific. Some of his observations are worth quoting at length:

> The town of Aguacatlán [Aguacatán] was congregated from a number of hamlets scattered all over the mountains by friar Pedro de Angulo, friar Juan de Torres, and other Dominican missionaries who used to preach throughout these Cuchumatán highlands ....[16]

According to Remesal, congregaciones were established in the Cuchumatanes by the Dominicans before ecclesiastical administration of much of the region was handed over to another religious order, the Mercedarian friars of Nuestra Señora de la Merced:

> The Dominicans not only gave the Mercedarians jurisdiction over Indians in the city [of Guatemala]; they were also given jurisdiction over Indians outside [the capital] in the towns of Quiché and Zacapula [Sacapulas]. All that is nowadays [c. 1615] administered by the [Mercedarian] monastery of Xacaltenango [Jacaltenango] was formerly under control of the Dominicans. Friar Pedro de Angulo and friar Juan de Torres, along with other Dominicans, were responsible for the hard work of bringing together Indian families of many different tongues who lived in scattered, outlying hamlets .... The town of Yantla [Chiantla] which lies at the foot of the mountains belonged to the [Dominican] Order .... The towns of these mountains, as far as Escuytenango

> in the district of Comitlán [Comitán], including Cuchumatlán [Todos Santos Cuchumatán], Güegüetenango [Huehuetenango], San Martín, Petatán, [and] Güista [San Antonio and Santa Ana Huista] ... were, without doubt, congregated by the Dominican fathers who built in them houses and churches that are still standing today.[17]

Remesal recorded particularly detailed information concerning congregación in the Ixil country of the eastern Cuchumatanes, including the names of settlements which furnished populations for the congregaciones at Chajul, Nebaj, and San Juan Cotzal:

> To Chaul [Chajul] in the sierra of Zacapulas were brought the settlements of Huyl, Boob, Ylom, Honcab, Chaxa, Aguazap, Huiz, and four others, all of which were associated with smaller, dependent settlements; this was undertaken at the request of the [Dominican] fathers who founded the monastery [of Sacapulas] and by order of Licenciado Pedro Ramírez de Quiñones .... To Aguacatlán [Aguacatán] and Nebá [Nebaj] were brought together the settlements of Vacá, Chel, Zalchil, Cuchil, and many others upward of twelve in number. To Cozal [San Juan Cotzal] were brought together Namá, Chicui, Temal, Caquilax, and many others .... The town of Cunén was also formed by congregating many smaller settlements.[18]

That Remesal recorded the names of outlying settlements brought together to form congregaciones is of special interest, not least because some of the "cleared" settlements are still in existence today.[19] Once gathered at a new town site, the various native communities collectively comprising the congregación often preserved their autochthonous identity by functioning as individual components known as parcialidades. Traditionally, these were social and territorial units of great antiquity, organised as patrilineal clans or localised kin groups and generally associated with a particular area of land.[20]

Although the Spaniards had difficulty in distinguishing between parcialidades and in grasping the complex distinctions operating within them, the Indians were always acutely aware of the differences both between and within their traditional social affiliations. After being moved to a congregación, Indian communities continued to uphold aboriginal patterns of social discrimination. Far from being homogeneous entities, many a congregación was a mosaic of small social groups which touched but which often did not interpenetrate. Numerous congregaciones in the Cuchumatán region were organised internally along these lines; that is, with several "cleared" communities functioning in the Spanish-established centres as parcialidades. Thus Ylom (Ilom) and Honcab (Oncap or Onkap), settlements recorded by Remesal as forming part of the congregación of Chajul, existed within the congregación as separate parcialidades. Similarly, Zalchil (Salquil) and Cuchil, settlements recorded by Remesal as forming part of the congregación of Nebaj, also survived within that congregación as distinguishable parcialidades.

Between 1664 and 1678, when assessing how much tribute should be paid by the Indians of Chajul and Nebaj, the Spanish authorities arranged that payment should be made not by town but by parcialidad. Ilom was assessed at 48 tribute payers, Oncap at 9-1/2, Salquil at 17, and Cuchil at 26-1/2.[21] The towns of Aguacatán, Cunén, San Juan Cotzal, and Sacapulas, all identified by Remesal as having been formed by congregating several smaller settlements, likewise were assessed for tribute individually by parcialidad.[22] The fact that the Spaniards found it expedient to allow these towns to pay tribute by parcialidad suggests that this was probably a convenient and efficient arrangement. It also indicates that over 100 years after congregación was implemented, the small social groups which comprised a settlement still retained a sense of their pre-Conquest individuality.

A good example of a heterogeneous congregación where ancient social divisions were long maintained is the town of Sacapulas. According to Captain Martín Alfonso Tovilla, the governor of Verapaz who visited Sacapulas in the early seventeenth century, the town had been formed originally by congregating six different Indian communities:

> The town of Sacapulas is divided into six parcialidades, each of which comprises a unit known as a calpul, because when the missionaries [first] brought them together, as each had only a small population, they brought four or five to each town in order to make a larger [settlement], and in this way each parcialidad maintained the name of the place it came from. And the lands that [the parcialidades] possessed [in the abandoned places] they still cultivate today in order to grow corn and other bodily needs.[23]

The testimony of Tovilla is confirmed by an official of the Crown, Andres Henríquez, who, in a report written in 1786, states that the *parcialidad* known as Magdalena, "like the other five of this town, was, and were, small settlements that were brought together by royal order to form the town of Sacapulas".[24] In the tribute list compiled for the years 1664-1678, five *parcialidades* are recorded, three of which were known by their native names (Tulteca, Uchabaha, and Aucanil) and two by Spanish names (San Francisco and Magdalena).[25] By the close of the eighteenth century, the *parcialidades* of Sacapulas still clung to their aboriginal identities, but were generally all known by Spanish names: Magdalena, San Sebastián, Santiago, San Pedro, Santo Tomás, and San Francisco.[26] The preservation of pre-Conquest identity within the *congregación* is illustrated by the fact that Indian land in the Sacapulas area was held by *parcialidad*. When a lengthy conflict occurred towards the end of the eighteenth century over land rights and boundaries, the disputes were not contested primarily between Indian and Spanish interests but between rival *parcialidades*.[27]

Autochthonous identity was maintained throughout the colonial period, therefore, by such practices as paying tribute and holding land by *parcialidad*. In the case of Aguacatán, deep-rooted social discrimination has persisted up to the present day. Remesal noted that Aguacatán "was congregated from a number of hamlets scattered all over the mountains".[28] Most of the historical documentation concerning Aguacatán distinguished between the *parcialidad* of Aguacatán and the neighbouring *parcialidad* of Chalchitán.[29] In Aguacatán today, a distinction can still be made between the Aguacatecos living to the west of the town square and the Chalchitecos living to the east of the town square, chiefly on the ground of dialect, styles of dress, and ceremonial patterns.[30]

In its initial stages, the process of *congregación* in the Cuchumatán highlands was a fairly successful operation which served Spanish imperial ends more than adequately. But it was not without its failures, frustrations, and long-term modifications.

The first attempts to settle Santa Eulalia in the remote northwestern reaches of the mountains had to be abandoned because Paiconop, the site originally chosen for the *congregación*, was too easily attacked by hostile Lacandón Indians invading from the low-lying Usumacinta basin to the north. The settlement was therefore moved to its present, more defensible site two kilometres to the southwest, but only after a church and other buildings had already been built at Paiconop.[31] Lacandón raids up into the Cuchumatán country persisted throughout the colonial period, despite numerous attempts by the Spaniards to conquer and subjugate this particularly troublesome group.[32] Towards the end of the seventeenth century, Fuentes y Guzmán declared that anyone making the trip from Santa Eulalia to San Mateo Ixtatán did so "with imminent risk from the Lacandón enemy who invade the mountains to rob and harass our poor Indians".[33] In response to this situation, two peacekeeping forces were established, one at San Mateo and another at Santa Eulalia, in order to protect the northern frontier territory of the Cuchumatanes to the west of the Ixcán river.[34]

The Ixil congregaciones in the northern Cuchumatán frontier to the east of the Ixcán also suffered depredations at the hands of invading Lacandones. The area around Ilom was especially vulnerable to Lacandón attack, which was probably one of the main reasons behind the Spaniards' decision to abandon the town after initially building a church there.[35] The Indians of Ilom were resettled in Chajul and in Santa Eulalia, the former receiving the Ilom church altar, the latter the Ilom church bells.[36] Chajul was itself attacked several times, the raiding Lacandones entering the Ixil country by way of the Xacbal valley. Unlike Ilom, however, Chajul was never abandoned.[37]

A combination of other factors and events had, throughout the colonial period, a disintegrating effect on congregación in the Cuchumatanes. Since many Indians were congregated involuntarily in the first instance, the Spanish authorities often had difficulty in keeping the population tied to a new town site. Indians frequently fled to the surrounding rural areas in order to escape the constant exploitation to which they were subjected in a congregación. In the seclusion of their old homes in the mountains, they were free of such compulsory demands as paying tribute, providing labour, working on local roads or the parish church, and serving as human carriers.[38] The refuge of the mountains was also sought whenever sickness and pestilence struck a congregación.[39]

The isolation and limited economic potential of the Cuchumatanes likewise had a weakening impact on the effectiveness of congregación. Due chiefly to a scarcity of Indian labour and a lack of entrepreneurial opportunity, Spanish Central America was economically depressed for much of the seventeenth century.[40] Even prior to the onset of depression around 1635, Spanish exploitation of the natural resources of Guatemala had concentrated either on the cacao-rich Pacific lowlands or on the fertile tierra templada to the south and east of the capital city of Santiago, where indigo could be grown and cattle raised. The highlands of the tierra fría to the north and west of Santiago --remote, rugged, and of little economic importance--were much less attractive to materially-minded Spaniards; the alcalde mayor of Zapotitlán, in a statement which clearly reveals the low estimation held by Spanish officialdom of the Cuchumatán resource base, probably spoke for a good many enterprising but frustrated Spaniards when, in 1570, he declared that "neither in the highlands of Jacaltenango, nor in those of Huehuetenango is there any cacao ... the land here being poor and unfruitful, good only for raising corn and chickens ...".[41] As a result of such appraisals, Spanish interest in northwestern Guatemala after conquest and congregación had been completed was never intense.

This attitude prevailed during the depressed years of the seventeenth century particularly and, to a lesser extent, throughout the eighteenth century up to the end of Spanish rule in Guatemala in 1821.

The consequences of this relative disinterest were far-reaching. The Indian peoples to the north and west of Santiago were not so ignored that their communities became the breeding ground of a physical form of rebellion. Instead, the Indians cultivated a subtle, passive resistance to the European invaders by reverting, in the course of the seventeenth century, to many of their former ways. It was not a return to life as it was led before the conquest. Rather, it was a synthesis of the elements of European culture which the Indians had accepted and the elements of pre-Columbian culture which the Indians had maintained. Neither "Indian" nor "Spanish", this synthesis of the old and the new produced a way of life perhaps best described as "conquest peasant".[42]

The synthetic "conquest peasant" culture of the Indians during the seventeenth century developed several characteristics which conflicted directly with Spanish precepts concerning native well-being. One of these was the increased desertion of congregaciones in favour of a more dispersed form of settlement as Spanish authority over the Indians grew progressively weaker, particularly in isolated regions like the Cuchumatanes, far-removed from the seat of power at Santiago.[43] Another characteristic was the revival of aspects of pre-Christian religion.[44]

As early as 1579, several Indian families at Chajul were living outside of the congregación and, as they were uncounted, were not paying tribute. The justice officer of Totonicapán, Francisco Díaz del Castillo, was ordered by the Crown to rectify the situation.[45] Later, at the end of the seventeenth century, Fuentes y Guzmán recorded that "wild and uncivilised" Indians were living in the mountains surrounding the town of San Juan Atitán, and that some 40 families at San Mateo Ixtatán were living 14 leagues outside the congregación at a site named Asantih.[46]

The Spanish authorities were not only concerned that the Indians living in scattered groups away from congregaciones were likely to evade paying tribute or supplying labour; they were also concerned with the alarming rejuvenation of "pagan" religion which manifested itself when Indians broke away from congregaciones and the scrutiny of local parish priests. This trend was particularly marked in the more remote parts of the Cuchumatanes. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, there were complaints of "idolatry" and "acts of barbarism" at both San Juan Atitán and San Mateo Ixtatán. At the latter town the Indians had erected, on a nearby mountain, "a shrine which was located in the same place as the ancient sacrificial altar of the times of paganism and barbarity".[47] In 1797, the governor of Huehuetenango, Francisco Xavier de Aguiree, found and destroyed, two leagues distant from the town of Concepción, "the pagan shrine where the Indians go to offer sacrifices and prayers to the devil".[48] The strongest statement of widespread religious non-conformity among the Indians of the Cuchumatanes comes from Archbishop Cortés y Larraz, who in the late eighteenth century claimed that the Christianity of the Indians "is nothing more than appearance and hypocrisy".[49] The refusal of the native peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands to abandon their pre-Christian rituals and ceremonies persisted throughout the nineteenth century and has survived up to the present day.[50]

Viewed in the context of the entire period of Spanish rule in Guatemala, the process of congregación in the Cuchumatanes was therefore not an unqualified success. The impact of congregación on the cultural landscape was certainly profound and long lasting. Even today, the mid-sixteenth century "congregations", dominated by churches towering over and above most surrounding buildings, are a conspicuous feature of the Cuchumatán landscape (Plate 3 and Plate 4). However, it is obvious that the majority of the region's Indian population now lives not in nucleated centres but in dispersed communities scattered about the countryside. An understanding of this present pattern of settlement lies in an understanding of the colonial experience of the Cuchumatán peoples.

In summary, following conquest and subjugation by imperial Spain, the Indians of the Cuchumatanes were moved from their outlying mountain homes into new, church-dominated congregaciones. These settlements were established by the Spanish authorities in the middle years of the sixteenth century to serve primarily as vehicles of Christianisation

Plate 3: The congregación of Nebaj in the Ixil country of the eastern Cuchumatanes.

Plate 4: The *congregación* of Santa Eulalia in the heart of the Cuchumatán highlands.

and economic exploitation. After congregación had been achieved, Spanish interest and involvement in the Cuchumatanes was slight, largely due to the physical isolation of the region and its limited economic potential. The prospects for Spaniards to accumulate wealth were simply much better elsewhere in Guatemala. Thus the Indians were able, especially during the seventeenth century depression, to modify the Spanish-imposed order of things to suit their own cultural preferences. One development in particular was the antithesis of Spanish designs: the abandonment of congregaciones for outlying rural areas where pre-Christian religious mores were revived. Conflicting with two basic tenets of congregación, this way of life was followed by a significant number of Indians during the middle and late colonial period, and has been a characteristic of the culture of the Cuchumatán peoples ever since.

The Administration of Empire

The congregaciones formed in the mid-sixteenth century were but tiny components of a great administrative scheme designed to expedite all levels of government, from local affairs to issues of state. Permeated by a massive bureaucracy and officialdom, the Spanish administration of empire was a complex arrangement which combined rather than separated certain governmental functions. However, two basic hierarchical structures--one politico-judicial in nature, the other ecclesiastical--can be identified.

Politico-judicial jurisdiction was headed by the monarch, whose royal authority was absolute and unquestionable. The monarch was advised on matters pertaining to the American colonies by the Council of the Indies, a body which never took up residence in the New World but which moved from place to place with the Spanish court. The Council of the Indies suggested lines of policy and nominated officials to positions in the colonies, besides auditing accounts, hearing testimony, and reviewing the conduct of individuals elected to office. In America, the highest ranking representatives of the Crown were the viceroys, generally Spaniards born in the mother country who ruled in the monarch's name and who were responsible for, among other things, revenue, justice, and Indian welfare. Viceroys were assisted by advisory bodies known as *audiencias*, stable institutions which provided an important focus for broad regional affiliation. The area presided over by an *audiencia* was divided into a number of units called *corregimientos* or *alcaldías mayores*, each of which was entrusted to the care of a *corregidor* or *alcalde mayor* charged with such duties as the co-ordination of tribute collection and the organisation of Indian work parties. *Corregimientos* or *alcaldías mayores* were associated with small, local authorities termed *ayuntamientos* or *cabildos*, essentially municipal councils operating in *congregaciones* and exercising control over both town and surrounding countryside.[51]

Paralleling the civil, politico-judicial structure was the ecclesiastical one. The authority of the monarch over the Catholic Church was assured under the terms of the Patronato Real, a pact between Rome and the Spanish Crown which guaranteed, by papal bulls of 1501 and 1508, that a wide range of ecclesiastical controls would be placed in the hands of the monarchy. Among these controls were the power of nomination and the management of church revenue. The largest unit of ecclesiastical geography was the archbishopric or archdiocese, to which all component bishoprics or dioceses were suffragan. Each bishopric or diocese was internally comprised of a number of curacies or parishes. To this episcopal organisation belonged the "secular" clergy, so named because they "lived in the world" (Latin: saeculum). Such men-of-the-cloth were distinct from the "regular" clergy who belonged to a specific religious order (e.g., Franciscan, Dominican, or Mercedarian) and who were bound to certain vows or rules (Latin: regula). Initially, the regular clergy had exclusively a missionary mandate and thus committed themselves to providing for the spiritual needs of the Indians. The secular clergy, on the other hand, were more geared towards the religious requirements of the European element in the colonies.[52]

During the colonial period, most of the isthmus of Central America, with the exception of the area of present-day Panama, was civilly administered as the audiencia of Guatemala. Today, this same unit would be comprised of the Mexican state of Chiapas, the self-governing colony of Belize, and the independent republics of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.[53] Created in 1543, the audiencia of Guatemala, a sub-unit of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, was placed under the charge of a presiding officer (presidente) subordinate to the Viceroy in Mexico.

Within the audiencia of Guatemala, the Cuchumatanes formed part of the large administrative division known either as the corregimiento (1547-1678) or the alcaldía mayor (1678-1785) of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango (see Plate 1).[54] This same area, after the imposition of the intendancy system in 1785-1786,[55] became the provincia of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango and was divided into two jurisdictions: the partido (district) of Totonicapán and the partido of Huehuetenango.[56] The jurisdiction referred to as the partido of Huehuetenango corresponds in rough areal extent to the Cuchumatán highlands (see Map 2) and was comprised of some 40 towns or congregaciones (see Table 5).

The 40 towns of the Cuchumatán highlands were divided for purposes of ecclesiastical administration into eight parishes, each of which had a cabecera de doctrina, the town where the priest lived and from where he made his parish rounds (see Table 5). The cabecera de doctrina gave its name to the entire parish. Priests were obliged to recognise the authority of the bishop of Guatemala resident in the capital of Santiago. It was not until 1745 that the bishopric of Guatemala was raised to archdiocese status, a situation which meant that for the first 200 years of Spanish rule the bishopric of Guatemala came under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the archdiocese of Mexico.[57]

TABLE 5

TOWNS (CONGREGACIONES) COMPRISING THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS OR THE PARTIDO OF HUEHUETENANGO (BY PARISH)

Name of Parish	Towns Comprising Parish
Uspantán	Uspantán, Cunén, Sacapulas
Nebaj	Nebaj, Cotzal, Chajul
Malacatán	Malacatán, Santa Bárbara, Colotenango, Ixtahuacán, San Gaspar Ixchil
Huehuetenango	Huehuetenango, San Lorenzo, San Sebastián, Santa Isabel, San Juan Atitán, Santiago Chimaltenango, San Pedro Necta
Soloma	Soloma, San Juan Ixcoy, Santa Eulalia, San Mateo Ixtatán, San Sebastián Coatán, San Miguel Acatán
Jacaltenango	Jacaltenango, Santa Ana and San Antonio Huista, Petatán, Concepción, San Marcos, San Andrés
Chiantla	Chiantla, Aguacatán y Chalchitán, Todos Santos Cuchumatán, San Martín Cuchumatán
Cuilco	Cuilco, Tectitán, Amatenango, San Martín Mazapa, San Francisco Motozintla

Source: AGCA A3.16, leg. 246, exp. 4912 and P. Cortés y Larraz, Descripción Geográfico-Moral de la Diocesis de Goathemala, (Guatemala: Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala, 1958).

Ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Cuchumatanes was initially granted solely to the Dominicans, and it was under their aegis and industry that congregación was first carried out. By the close of the sixteenth century, however, parts of the Cuchumatán region had already passed into the charge of the Mercedarians. The Franciscan friar Alonso Ponce recorded Huehuetenango and Chiantla under Mercedarian control in 1586 when he passed through the Cuchumatanes on his return to Mexico.[58] By the end of the seventeenth century, over 30 towns in the Cuchumatanes were under Mercedarian hegemony, with the Dominicans retaining only six.[59] In 1754, a royal edict ordered the secularisation of all parish charges, but by special permission it was possible for a member of the regular clergy to continue to serve as a parish priest. The Cuchumatán parishes of Jacaltenango, Malacatán, and Nebaj, for example, were still administered by the regular clergy at the end of the colonial period.[60]

Both the politico-judicial and ecclesiastical arms of government in Spanish America were rigidly hierarchical; the dictates of those at the top were transferred, in theory if not always in practice, into action and fulfilment by those at the bottom. The state sought, by deed and decree, to extend and exert its control over every facet of colonial life. It is to the operation of certain controls and the impact they had on the land and the people of the Cuchumatán highlands that attention will now be focussed.

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

[1] Quoted in J.H. Elliott, Imperial Spain (1469-1716), (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1976), p. 65.

[2] G.M. Foster, "Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage", Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, No. 27, (New York: 1960), p. 2.

[3] C.O. Sauer, The Early Spanish Main, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), is a masterful reconstruction of the tragic Spanish conquest and colonisation of the Caribbean between 1492 and 1519. By the latter date, when Cortés was establishing a foothold for Spain on the American mainland and when Charles V was setting up the Council of the Indies, the Spanish Main was already "a sorry shell. The natives, whom Columbus belatedly knew to be the wealth of the land, were destroyed. The gold placers of the islands were worked out. The gold treasures which the Indians of Castilla del Oro had acquired had been looted. What most Spaniards wanted was to get out and seek their fortunes in parts as yet untried and unknown"; Sauer, op. cit., p. 294. Despite attempts by the Crown at efficient and orderly administration, the experience of the Spanish Main was later shared by many parts of the American mainland.

[4] L.B. Simpson, The Encomienda in New Spain: The Beginnings of Spanish Mexico, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 29-38 and 123-144 contains an analysis of the Laws of Burgos (1512) and the New Laws (1542) respectively.

[5] Libro VI, Título III, Recopilación de las leyes de Indias, translated in L.B. Simpson, Studies in the Administration of the Indians in New Spain, Ibero-Americana No. 7, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934), p. 43.

[6] B.N. Colby and P.L. van den Berghe, Ixil Country: A Plural Society in Highland Guatemala, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 44; and T.T. Veblen, The Ecological, Cultural, and Historical Bases of Forest Preservation in Totonicapán, Guatemala, (Berkeley: University of California, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1975), p. 338.

[7] Elliott, op. cit., p. 59, defines adelantado as "a hereditary title granted by medieval Castilian kings and conferring upon its holder special military powers and the rights of government over a frontier province. The

leader of an expedition (such as Alvarado) would also expect to enjoy the spoils of conquest, in the shape of moveable property and captives, and to receive grants of land and a title of nobility ...".

[8] W.L. Sherman, "A Conqueror's Wealth: Notes on the Estate of Pedro de Alvarado", The Americas: 26 (1969), pp. 199-213; and T.T. Veblen, "Native Population Decline in Totonicapán, Guatemala", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 1977, p. 492.

[9] A. Recinos and D. Goetz (translators), The Annals of the Cakchiquels, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 136. The Cakchiquel chronicle states: "In the fifth month of the sixth year after the beginning of our instruction in the word of Our Lord God (i.e. in July, 1548) the houses were grouped together by order of the lord Juan Roser. Then the people came from the caves and the ravines".

[10] A. de Remesal, Historia General de las Indias Occidentales y Particular de la Gobernación de Chiapa y Guatemala, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1964-1966), Vol. II, pp. 177-180; F. de Paula García Peláez, Memorias para la Historia del Antiguo Reino de Guatemala, (Guatemala: Biblioteca "Goathemala", 1968), Vol. I, p. 163; M.J. MacLeod, Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History, 1520-1720, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 120-123; and S. Martínez Peláez, La Patria del Criollo: Ensayo de Interpretación de la Realidad Colonial Guatemalteca, (San José: Editorial Universitaria, 1975), pp. 443-460.

[11] O. La Farge, Santa Eulalia: The Religion of a Cuchumatán Indian Town, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. ix. La Farge writes: "The lack of [pre-conquest] ruins in the immediate vicinity of Jacaltenango may be due to the fact that the extensive church, convent, and churchyard were constructed on just the site where one would expect the ancient temples to have been placed or to the formation here of an artificial reconcentrado, which became stabilized".

[12] From Recopilación de las leyes de Indias, cited in W.B. Taylor, Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 67.

[13] Simpson, op. cit., p. 44.

[14] Veblen, op. cit., (1975), p. 339.

[15] R.M. Carmack, Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Sources, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 178-180, contains a succinct review of Remesal's contribution. Several reservations aside, Carmack considers Remesal's two volume work "an important source on the early history and cultures of Guatemala".

[16] Remesal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 259. Aguacatán exists today as the cabecera of the municipio of the same name.

[17] Remesal, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 243-244. Jacaltenango, Chiantla, Todos Santos Cuchumatán, Huehuetenango, San Antonio Huista, and Santa Ana Huista exist today as cabeceras of their respective municipios. San Martín is an aldea of the municipio of Todos Santos Cuchumatán and Petatán is an aldea of the municipio of Concepción.

[18] Remesal, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 178-179. Chajul, Nebaj, San Juan Cotzal, and Cunén exist today as cabeceras of their respective municipios. Some of the smaller settlements which furnished populations for the congregaciones in the Ixil country also still exist. For example, Ylom (now Ilom) and Chel are aldeas of the municipio of Chajul; Huyl (now Juil) and Chaxá are caseríos of the same municipio. Namá is a caserío of the municipio of San Juan Cotzal. And Zalchil (now Salquil) is an aldea of the municipio of Nebaj.

Colby and van den Berghe (op. cit., p. 43, footnote 4) incorrectly state that Chaxá and Namá may no longer exist. Both settlements are still in existence and are listed as caseríos in M.M. Urrutia, La División Política y Administrativa de la República de Guatemala, (Guatemala: Editorial Iberia, 1961), Vol. I, pp. 450 and 456. Chaxá is also clearly marked on the 1:50,000 topographic map of Tziajá published by the Instituto Geográfico Nacional; it lies about ten kilometres northeast of Chajul. Namá is also clearly marked on the 1:50,000 topographic map of Nebaj; it lies about four kilometres southeast of San Juan Cotzal. The existence of such formerly cleared settlements as populated places in the present day suggests a definite resettlement trend some time during the past 400 years. Resettlement of abandoned outlying areas from established congregaciones possibly occurred after the third quarter of the seventeenth century when the native population, emerging from 150 years of post-contact collapse, began slowly to increase in number and hence precipitate the need for more agricultural land. Alternately, cleared districts could have been resettled earlier by fugitive Indians returning to their former homes to escape paying tribute or rendering labour to Spanish authorities in the congregaciones.

[19] See footnote 18.

[20] MacLeod, op. cit., p. 29.

[21] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391.

[22] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391.

[23] M. Alfonso Tovilla, Relación Histórica Descriptiva de las Provincias de la Verapaz y de la del Manché, (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1960), p. 218.

[24] AGCA, A1, leg. 6037, exp. 53258.

[25] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391. The parcialidad known as Tulteca was probably comprised of the descendants of the Tlaxcalan auxiliaries who apparently settled in Sacapulas when the wars of conquest were over. They were likely attracted by the possibility of controlling the important salt springs in the area as a reward for the military assistance they gave to the Spaniards. See Carmack, op. cit., pp. 37-39.

Sacapulas was not the only town in the Cuchumatanes where Tlaxcalan Indians settled. There were also important Tlaxcalan contingents living in the mid-sixteenth century at Aguacatán and Huehuetenango. Many Tlaxcalans chose to settle in Guatemala after the conquest, rather than return to their native Mexico. They frequently solicited the Spanish colonial authorities for special favours and privileges over Guatemalan Indians in return for their military services. In recognition of their contribution, the Spaniards would grant Tlaxcalans exemption from paying tribute or rendering agricultural labour, in theory if not always in practice. The experience of the Tlaxcalan residents of Aguacatán and Huehuetenango was not a happy one. In 1561, they complained bitterly to the Crown that their special status and rights were being violated as they were being forced to work and to pay tribute. They also claimed that they were being forced to buy merchandise at inflated prices from the local judge and priests. The Tlaxcalans considered their treatment unjust, since they had already suffered great hardships and deprivations "in the service of Your Majesty" under the conquistador Pedro de Alvarado. So dissatisfied with their treatment were the settlers that they requested to be administered by authorities in Mexico who, they felt, would treat them with the respect they deserved. See AGI:AG52.

[26] AGCA, A.1, leg. 6037, exp. 53258 and A1, leg. 6040, exp. 53305. Carmack, op. cit., p. 208, has correlated the

parcialidad of Santiago with the Canil lineage "who came from Tula". The parcialidad Santo Tomás was associated with the Lamaquib lineage; cf. Carmack, op. cit., p. 60 and AGCA, A1, leg. 5979, exp. 52536.

[27] Carmack, op. cit., pp. 206-209, offers a summary of the conflicts.

[28] Remesal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 259.

[29] Aguacatán and Chalchitán, for example, are assessed separately in the tribute list of 1677; AGCA, A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391.

[30] H. McArthur and L. McArthur, "Aguacatec", in M. Mayers (ed.), The Languages of Guatemala, (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1966), p. 140. A. Recinos, Monografía del Departamento de Huehuetenango, (Guatemala: Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1954), p. 75, actually refers to "el doble pueblo de Aguacatán y Chalchitán".

[31] O. La Farge, op. cit., pp. xi, 4, and 63. The name "Paiconop" means "former village". The Spaniards probably first settled Paiconop and built a church there because the site was an important pre-Columbian ceremonial centre.

[32] The best analysis of the expeditions undertaken with a view to pacifying the Lacandones is D.Z. Stone, "Some Spanish Entradas, 1524-1695", Middle American Research Series No. 4, (New Orleans: Tulane University, 1932), pp. 208-296. The efforts of the Spaniards to Christianise the Lacandones and to "congregate" them into towns never had any permanent degree of success. Cf. A.M. Tozzer, "A Spanish Manuscript Letter on the Lacandones in the Archives of the Indies at Seville", Proceedings of the Eighteenth International Congress of Americanists, (London: 1912), pp. 497-509. At the beginning of the eighteenth century it was suggested that in order to stop any further depredations, the Lacandones should be moved from their Usumacinta homeland and settled in the Cuchumatanes at a site named Asantic, near San Mateo Ixtatán. Whether or not this re-settlement occurred is not known. Cf. AGI:AG225 and Recinos, op. cit., pp. 396-397. La Farge, op. cit., p. 68, states that Lacandón raids into the Cuchumatanes persisted until the early nineteenth century.

[33] F.A. de Fuentes y Guzmán, Recordación Florida, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Tomo CCLIX, 1972), p. 39.

[34] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., p. 39.

[35] Colby and van den Berghe, op. cit., p. 40.

[36] R. Elliot and H. Elliot, "Ixil", in M. Mayers, op. cit., p. 126. The decision to resettle Ixil speaking Indians of Ilom at the Kanjobal speaking town of Santa Eulalia makes very little sense. The distance from Ilom to Santa Eulalia is also twice the distance from Ilom to Chajul. The Indians from Ilom who were resettled at Chajul presumably formed there the parcialidad known as Ilom. That Ixil speaking Indians were moved from Ilom to Santa Eulalia is attested by the recording of Ixil speakers there in notes made by Father Baltasar Baldiva, a Spanish missionary priest living and working among the Ixil around the middle of the nineteenth century. Cf. Elliot, op. cit., p. 127.

[37] F. Termer, Etnología y Etnografía de Guatemala, (Guatemala: Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca, 1957), pp. 7-8; F. Ximénez, Historia de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapa y Guatemala, (Guatemala: Sociedad de Geografía e Historia, 1930), Vol. II, p. 221; and Tovilla, op. cit., p. 209. Ximénez has the following account: "In the year 1664 the Lacandón Indians arrived at the cornfields of the town of Chajul, and in one [field] they came across an [Ixil] Indian mother who was breast feeding her child; the mother escaped, but left the child behind, running to the town [for safety]. The Indians [of Chajul] took up arms, and marched to the cornfields four leagues out of town, but when they arrived there the [Lacandón] Indians had already fled. It was discovered that the child [left behind] had been sacrificed, its chest torn open and its heart pulled out".

[38] Martínez Peláez, op. cit., pp. 545-546 and AGCA, Al, leg. 6118, exp. 56749. The latter is dated 1819 and is a report from an official of the Crown at Nebaj who states that the Indians of the town ran away to the mountains nearby in order to escape the paying of tribute.

[39] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 249, exp. 5036. Dated 1804-1805, this document records that the Indians of Soloma and Santa Eulalia abandoned their congregaciones for the open countryside around Chemal following an outbreak of typhus. It was initially thought by the Spaniards that the Indians would be better cared for in congregaciones in times of crises, particularly during an outbreak of disease. Unintentionally, congregación probably had the opposite effect, since communicable diseases spread more easily in areas of dense population than in dispersed settlements like those formerly inhabited by the Indians. Cf. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 121.

[40] MacLeod, *op*. *cit*., p. 231 and pp. 310-329. The notion of the seventeenth century as being a time of economic contraction throughout Spanish America, particularly in Mexico, was first advanced by Woodrow Borah in his monograph *New Spain's Century of Depression*, Ibero-Americana No. 35, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951). Central to Borah's hypothesis was that "population loss in the sixteenth century meant a corresponding reduction in the labor force and, hence, in productivity; and that Spanish colonial society through the seventeenth century accordingly suffered shortages of supplies. Borah related depopulation to the decrease in mining output, to the development of repartimiento and peonage, and to the emergence of the hacienda as a Spanish-controlled productive unit. Similar depopulation elsewhere in Spanish America had similar results, and the demographic and economic decline of Spain itself in the seventeenth century further contributed to the Mexican depression", (C. Gibson, "Writings on Colonial Mexico", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 55, No. 2, May 1975, p. 305).

Over the past decade, a number of studies have either challenged or modified, chiefly at the local or regional level, the interpretation of the seventeenth century as one of economic stagnation. This literature, for the most part spatially confined to Mexico, includes the following: P.J. Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico: Zacatecas, 1546-1700*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); R. Boyer, "Mexico in the Seventeenth Century: Transition of a Colonial Society", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 57, No. 3, August 1977, pp. 455-478; D.A. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) and *Haciendas and Ranchos in the Mexican Bajio: Leon, 1700-1860*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); D.A. Brading and H.E. Cross, "Colonial Silver Mining: Mexico and Peru", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4, November 1972, pp. 545-579; L.S. Hoberman, "Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Mexico City: A Preliminary Portrait", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 57, No. 3, August 1977, pp. 479-503; and J.I. Israel, "Mexico and the 'General Crisis' of the Seventeenth Century", *Past and Present*, No. 63, May 1974, pp. 33-57 and *Race, Class, and Politics in Colonial Mexico, 1610-1670*, (Oxford University Press, 1975). The perspective of this school is succinctly summarised by Boyer (*op*. *cit*., p. 478), who suggests that scholars henceforth "must view seventeenth-century New Spain not as a century of depression, but as one of transition to capitalism, economic diversification, and vigorous regional economies, both subsistence and tied to the market economy based in Mexico City. Only this approach can relate the demographic profiles of Spaniards and Indians, the decline of transatlantic trade, the trends in silver production, and self-sufficiency in defense to the structure of colonial society and to details of life in the capital and its crises".

Although the debate is still evolving, it is likely that fruitful resolution of the conflicting viewpoints will be brought about by scholars who, like Hegel, understand that history, and everything in history, proceeds from thesis, through antithesis, to synthesis. Gibson (op. cit., p. 307) shows such necessary understanding: "Though the conclusions tend now to be articulated in polar terms, the hope, of course, is that the various interpretations of the seventeenth century, or many of them, will eventually be reconciled. In all scholarly work there is a natural initial tendency to hypothesize generalities based on the immediate evidence examined. Reconciliation, then, consists of qualifying these generalities in relation to other generalties, while the evidence and its more limited application remain valid".

It is difficult to know what effect the developments outlined above will have on the historiography of Central America. It may well be that in the years ahead studies will appear that compromise or refine MacLeod's depiction of Central America between 1635 and 1720 as being in a state of economic depression. In the meantime MacLeod's contribution must stand, in the absence of work in any way comparable to it, as the most developed, intelligible, and plausible framework by which to investigate the colonial experience in Central America.

[41] MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 68-95, 176-203, and 308; and Carmack, op. cit., p. 383, which contains information taken from AGI:AG 968.

[42] MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 326-327.

[43] MacLeod, op. cit., p. 328.

[44] C. Gibson, Spain in America, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 75, holds that the missionary endeavors of the friars responsible for congregación succeeded not in converting the Indians to orthodox Christianity but in creating a "syncretic" religion which was essentially "Catholic-Christian in its externals but non-Christian in some of its basic postulates or in its enveloping world view".

[45] The source of this information is a copy of a royal order inside the baptismal registry for the town of Chajul from 1676 to 1778. See Elliot, op. cit., p. 126.

[46] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 26 and 40. Fuentes y Guzmán claims that, with the help of friar Alonso Paez, he personally went to Asantih and forced the 40 families living there back to the congregación at San Mateo Ixatán. This was an extremely risky business, as Asantih lay only four leagues from the territory of the hostile

Lacandón Indians. The site Asantih was the place suggested by the Spanish authorities for the resettlement of the Lacandones themselves. Cf. AGI:AG 225 and Recinos, op. cit., pp. 396-397.

[47] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., p. 26 and AGCA, A1, leg. 2, exp. 23. The Indians of San Juan Atitán committing the "sacrilegious" acts to the old Mayan gods were eventually brought to "justice". They were taken to Huehuetenango where, after a public flogging, they served as slaves of the parish church. Cf. Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., p. 27.

[48] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 255, exp. 5719.

[49] P. Cortés y Larraz, Descripción Geográfico-Moral de la Diocesis de Goathemala, (Guatemala: Sociedad de Geografía e Historia, 1958), Vol. II, p. 44.

[50] A Spanish priest working in the Ixil country in the mid-nineteenth century declared that "after 300 years of being evangelized, [the Indians] are seen today to be in a worse state than in the first century, marching backwards toward their ancient barbarities, mixed with vices and irreligion of other castes"; cf. Elliot, op. cit., p. 127. For the continuity of pre-Columbian systems of belief in Cuchumatán communities in the twentieth century, see O. La Farge, Santa Eulalia: The Religion of a Cuchumatán Indian Town, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947) and M. Oakes, The Two Crosses of Todos Santos: Survivals of Mayan Religious Ritual, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951). In my wanderings throughout the Cuchumatanes, I have come across several places where the "old" religion is still carried out, including San Mateo Ixatán, Santa Eulalia, and Todos Santos.

[51] Gibson, op. cit., pp. 90-99; and H.F. Cline, "Introductory Notes on Territorial Divisions of Middle America", in Handbook of Middle American Indians, Vol. 7, Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources: Part One, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), pp. 24-26.

[52] Gibson, op. cit., pp. 68-78; and Cline, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

[53] MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 23 and 400.

[54] P. Gerhard, "Colonial New Spain, 1519-1786: Historical Notes on the Evolution of Minor Political Jurisdictions", in Handbook of Middle American Indians, Vol. 7, Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources: Part One, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), p. 132.

[55] Part of the legislation known as the Bourbon Reforms, the intendancy system, introduced throughout Spanish America in the second half of the eighteenth century, was designed "to centralize the colonial administration still further under the Crown, to eliminate abuses of officeholding, and to increase the royal revenue"; Gibson, *op. cit.*, p. 170. The impact of the Bourbon Reforms in the Reino de Guatemala is explored in detail in M. Wortman, "Bourbon Reforms in Central America: 1750-1786", *The Americas*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, October 1975, pp. 222-238.

[56] H.F. Cline, "Viceroyalty to Republics, 1786-1952: Historical Notes on the Evolution of Middle American Political Units", in *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Vol. 7, *Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources: Part One*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), p. 161; and D. Juarros, *Compendio de la Historia de la Ciudad de Guatemala*, (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1937), pp. 46-48.

[57] Cline, "Territorial Divisions", *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[58] A. Ponce, "Relación breve y verdadera de algunas cosas de las muchas que sucedieron a Padre Fray Alonso Ponce en las Provincias de la Nueva España", *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala*, Vol. 39 (1966), No. 1-4, pp. 208-212; and Remesal, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 241-244. According to Remesal, the Mercedarians left Spain for the New World in 1537, arriving that same year in Chiapas and entering Guatemala a year later in 1538. They came to Guatemala, as did all the missionary orders, with royal permission. In 1542, the Mercedarians were given land in the newly-founded capital of Santiago where they built a monastery. Remesal, a Dominican, claims that the Mercedarians were not very "missionary oriented" and restricted themselves initially only to the spiritual needs of the European colonists. Only after the Dominicans surrendered control over parts of the "towns of Quiché and Sacapulas" to the Mercedarians did the latter spread north and west from Santiago with any degree of missionary commitment.

[59] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-44. The towns under Mercedarina control included Concepción Huehuetenango, San Lorenzo Mazatenango, Santa Isabel, Santiago Chimaltenango, San Juan Atitán, San Pedro Necta, Santa Barbara, Colotenango, San Gaspar Ixchil, San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán, Chiantla, Todos Santos Cuchumatán, San Martín Cuchumatán, Aguacatán y Chalchitán, San Andrés Cuilco, Santa María Magdalena Tetitán, San Francisco Motozintla, San Gerónimo, Santiago Amatenango, San Martín Mazapa, San Pedro Soloma, San Sebastián Coatán, San Miguel Acatán, Santa Eulalia, San Juan Ixcoy, Purificación Jacaltenango, Concepción, San Antonio and Santa Ana

Huista, Petatán, and San Marcos [Jacaltenango]. The towns under Dominican control included Santo Domingo Sacapulas, Santa María Cunén, San Miguel Uspantán, Santa María Nebaj, San Gaspar Chajul, and San Juan Cotzal. It was common for Spanish established towns to be given a Christian prefix such as the name of a personage who became the town patron saint. During the colonial period, towns were generally known by their full title, that is, patron saint plus place name, and appear as such in the literature.

[60] Recinos, op. cit., p. 466; Cline, "Territorial Divisions", op. cit., p. 27; and Juarros, op. cit., p. 46.

CHAPTER SIX

SPANISH CONTROL OF THE INDIAN POPULATION: ENCOMIENDA, TRIBUTE, AND FORCED NATIVE LABOUR

> The two republics, of Spaniards and Indians, of which this Kingdom consists are so repugnant to each other ... that it seems that the conservation of the former always means the oppression and destruction of the latter.
>
> Luis de Velasco,
> Viceroy of New Spain (1595).

> The Spanish Empire was built upon the labor of the Indians.
>
> L.B. Simpson (1938)

Introduction

By the middle years of the sixteenth century, the Spanish colonial policy of congregación had resulted in the formation of a nucleated pattern of Indian settlement throughout much of highland Guatemala. The logic behind the ambitious task of settling thousands of Indian families in church-dominated "congregations" was not solely to promote their conversion to Christianity. An equally significant design was the creation of a centralised source of labour which could be drawn upon to carry out much more wordly pursuits.

Imperial Spain sought to utilise the human resources of congregaciones through the operation of a number of exploitative devices the most important of which were the encomienda, the tasación de tributos, and the repartimiento.

Encomienda

Defined crudely, the encomienda was a means by which privileged Spaniards enjoyed the right to exact tribute, and initially also labour, from a specified number of Indians in a designated town or group of towns. The history of the institution is both complex and dynamic. Grants of encomienda in the first half of the sixteenth century, assigned by officials of the Crown primarily to soldiers who had fought with distinction in the battles of conquest, frequently involved the allocation of impressive amounts of goods and services. When it was finally abolished in the eighteenth century, the encomienda represented little more than a system of awarding small royal pensions to favoured members of both the colonial and peninsular Spanish elite. Over time, the policy of the Crown with respect to the functioning of encomienda became one of restriction. Encomenderos, individuals who held and shared encomiendas, often wielded considerable power as recipients of Indian tribute and labour in the early period of Spanish rule. Thereafter, the Crown introduced legislation painstakingly devised to limit the economic and political clout of the encomienda and to prevent even the most enterprising of encomenderos from becoming semi-autonomous feudal lords. Such measures as the abolition of forced native labour and the prohibition of inheritance beyond a certain number of "lives" did much to curtail the development of encomienda as a personal weapon. Thus in the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by a slow and deliberate process of attrition, most encomiendas either reverted to the Spanish Crown or were severely constrained as a source of private income. In this way, to use a characteristic phrase in the literature, the encomienda was "tamed". Of particular importance in the "taming" of encomienda in Central America were the reforms carried out during the terms of office of President Alonso López de Cerrato (1548-1555) and President García de Valverde (1578-1589). The operation of encomienda can therefore be regarded as one in which privileges originally granted by the Crown were gradually eroded, or completely removed, by the subsequent implementation of restrictive legislation.[1]

Although scant and of limited reconstructive potential, the extant archival documentation suggests that the history of encomienda in the Cuchumatán highlands conforms roughly to the general pattern outlined above. The earliest surviving titles to Cuchumatán towns, recorded in the tasación (assessment) prepared between 1548 and 1551 by President Cerrato, indicate that encomienda in the mid-sixteenth century involved not only the privilege of receiving tribute but also the right to the labour of a certain number of Indians (see Table 6 and Appendix 1). At least six towns in the Cuchumatanes were held in encomienda at this time by either conquistadores or their offspring. Some of the larger towns, such as Huehue-

TABLE 6

TOWNS OF THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS INCLUDED IN THE TASACION PREPARED BY PRESIDENT CERRATO (1548-1551)

Town	Number of Tributarios	Name of Encomendero(s)	Annual Amount of Tribute
Cochumatlán (Todos Santos)	-	"Menores hijos de Marcos Ruiz" and García de Aguilar	6 *fanegas*[1] of corn 200 *mantas*[2] 8 dozen chickens 4 *fanegas* of wheat
Zacapulas (Sacapulas)	160	Cristóbal Salvatierra and "menor hijo de Juan Paez"	96 *fanegas* of salt 18 dozen chickens 28 *xiquipiles*[3] of cacao 16 "indios de servicio"[4]
Huehuetenango	500	Juan de Espinar	15 *fanegas* of corn 4 *fanegas* of cotton 300 *mantas* 5 *fanegas* of beans 100 "panes"[5] of Sacapulas salt 12 dozen chickens 100 *cargas*[6] of chile 6 "indios de servicio"
Uspantán	-	Santos de Figueroa	2 *fanegas* of corn 80 *mantas* 5 dozen chickens 4 "cantaros"[7] of honey 8 "indios de servicio"
Soloma	40	Diego de Alvarado and Juan de Castrogui	4 *fanegas* of corn 100 *mantas* 150 chickens 8 "indios de servicio"
Chalchuytan (Chalchitán)	60	Hernán Perez Peñate and "los menores hijos de Alonso del Peñegar"	2 *fanegas* of cotton 80 *mantas* 20 dozen chickens 240 *cargas* of salt 4 "indios de servicio"
Xacaltenango (Jacaltenango)	500	"Menor hijo de Gonzalo de Ovalle"	12 *fanegas* of corn 1-1/2 *fanegas* of beans 4 *fanegas* of cotton 10 dozen chickens 80 *petates*[8] 3 *fanegas* of wheat 6 *fanegas* of salt 400 *mantas* 2 *arrobas*[9] of honey 25 *cargas* of chile 6 "indios de servicio"
Aguacatán	100	"Menor hijo de Juan Paez"	3 *fanegas* of corn 3 *fanegas* of wheat 100 *mantas* 54 *petates* 7 dozen chickens 1 *arroba* of honey 2 "indios de servicio"
Ystatán (San Mateo)	65	Diego Sánchez Santiago	12 *fanegas* of salt 2 *fanegas* of corn 35 *mantas* 3 dozen chickens 2 "indios de servicio"

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[1] A *fanega* is a unit of dry measure of roughly 1.5 bushels. The area planted with this amount of seed was known as the *fanega de sembradura*.

[2] A *manta* was a standard square of cotton cloth.

[3] A *xiquipil* was a basic Indian measure of 8,000 cacao beans

[4] "Indios de servicio" were Indians granted to an *encomendero*. They were required to perform a number of tasks. Labour from the stipulated number of Indians was provided on a regular basis to the *encomendero*.

[5] A "pan" of salt is a large cake, roughly the same size as a loaf of bread.

[6] A *carga* was a load of about 2 *fanegas*.

[7] A "cantaro" is a jug of honey.

[8] A *petate* is a woven straw mat, used for bedding.

[9] An *arroba* is a unit of about 25 pounds.

tenango, Jacaltenango, and Sacapulas, initially furnished enough tribute and labour to provide *encomenderos* with a fairly comfortable living; Juan de Espinar, the first *encomendero* of Huehuetenango, was once so wealthy that he could afford to lose 20,000 *pesos de oro* through gambling.[2] By the early seventeenth century, however, prohibiitive governmental legislation and a dwindling native population resulted in the failure of the *encomienda* system to support its recipients in the style of life to which they aspired. *Encomienda* privileges around the year 1610, particularly at San Juan Ixcoy, San Mateo Ixtatán, Soloma, and Uspantán, resembled little more than a modest type of pension.[3] About half-way through the seventeenth century depression, *encomienda* benefits were minimal, and at Aguacatán, Chajul, and Nebaj were the equivalent of a very humble annuity (see Appendix 2). In 1678, at the depth of the economic recession, the *encomienda* income accruing to the holder of Chiantla and Huehuetenango, together with the town of Guajiaquero in Honduras, amounted to only 400 pesos a year.[4] By the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, holders of *encomienda* had completely lost interest in the institution and sought their fortune in other potentially more lucrative concerns. Most Cuchumatán *encomiendas* were then declared vacant and reverted to the Crown.[5] For the remainder of the colonial period the Indian towns of the Cuchumatán highlands paid tribute not to individuals but, via a number of officials, to the royal treasury.

Documentation relating to the history of one single encomienda is most complete for the town of Huehuetenango. Shortly after the conquest, Huehuetenango was assigned to the conquistador Juan de Espinar. A distinguished soldier and one time alcalde ordinario of Santiago de Guatemala, the ambitious Espinar also owned land in the Huehuetenango area and was responsible for the discovery and exploitation of the silver ores in the hills north of Chiantla. Prior to the reforms introduced by President Cerrato in 1548, Espinar exacted encomienda labour from 200 to 300 "indios de servicio" who hauled ore and wood in the endomendero's mines; Indian women he put to work in the preparation of food raised from his nearby holdings or paid by Indians as part of their tribute requirement. Espinar earned 8,700 pesos a year from his mining operation and a further 3,000 pesos annually from his involvement in agriculture. After the Cerrato reforms, Espinar was allocated the labour of only six "indios de servicio" and the tribute of 500 tributaries from whom he received corn, beans, chile peppers, cotton cloth, salt, and chickens.[6]

In 1562, after Espinar's death, Huehuetenango was granted to Luis Manuel Pimentel (see Appendix 3), a Spanish vecino of Santiago who was later awarded sizeable agricultural holdings in the Huehuetenango district.[7] When Pimentel himself died in 1575 the encomienda was passed on to his widow, Doña Juana de Guzmán.[8] Around 1580, at the time of the new province-wide tasación of President Valverde, Huehuetenango was assigned to Francisco de la Fuente who received an unimpressive amount of tribute from 367 tributaries.[9] The downward adjustment by Valverde of the tribute assessment of Huehuetenango, carried out after the tasación of the town had already been substantially reduced by Cerrato some 30 years earlier, reflects directly the two factors most responsible for the decline of encomienda as a viable economic institution: the enforcement, by officers of the Crown, of legislation designed to curb the power of encomenderos and the diminution of an overworked, under-nourished, and disease-stricken native population.[10]

Almost a century after the Valverde tasación, the encomienda of Huehuetenango comprised the tribute of a mere 156-1/2 tributaries who paid their encomendero, José de Balcarcel, an annuity of 78 pesos and 2 reales along with a small quantity of corn, chickens, and cotton cloth.[11] In 1678 the encomienda was given to Doña Mariana de Alvarado y Velasco of the city of Madrid who derived from it an insubstantial pension.[12] Soon thereafter the encomienda escheated and the Crown became the sole recipient of the now meagre tribute of Huehuetenango.

Two developments in the encomienda history of Huehuetenango are of special interest. First, there was an early connection in the district between encomienda and landholding per se. Two sixteenth century encomenderos of Huehuetenango, Juan de Espinar and Luis Manuel Pimentel, both owned land in the vicinity of the town; the latter was particularly assiduous in seeking formal title to land within the limits of his encomienda.[13] Although most scholars now consider the history of the encomienda and that of the landed estate (hacienda) as legally quite separate and distinct,[14] there was frequently, as James Lockhart has pointed out, a close link "in the realm of actual practice" between the two institutions.[15] Such was the case of Huehuetenango. Second, there was a marked tendency towards "absentee" holding by the late seventeenth century as the Crown increasingly awarded encomiendas in Central America to powerful Mexican families or members of the peninsular Spanish nobility, much to the chagrin of Guatemalan Creoles.[16] One of the last encomenderas of Huehuetenango was a madrileña who probably never set foot near her encomienda and who would likely only think of it when wondering why her pension from the royal treasury amounted to so little.[17]

Tasación de Tributos

It is no coincidence that congregación in highland Guatemala was contemporaneous with attempts by the Crown to compile accurate lists of the number of Indians who could be expected to serve as suppliers of tribute; congregaciones were created in the first place with economic as well as spiritual considerations in mind. While "congregating" the Indians in the mid-sixteenth century, Spanish officials initiated a procedure of tribute assessment known as the tasación de tributos.

The tasación de tributos was a count which recorded the number of Indians in any given town from whom tribute could legally be exacted. Such people were designated "indios tributarios", Indian tributaries. Although classification of the term changed throughout the colonial period, a tributario was generally a married Indian male between the ages of 18 and 50, together with his wife and children. A full tributario was therefore a family head, and represented one domestic or household unit. Widows, widowers, and unmarried adult males and females were defined as half-tributaries. Exemption from paying tribute, a status referred to as "reservado", was granted to Indian leaders and their eldest sons, to children, to the aged, to the sick and infirm, and to those involved in some way with the work of the church. A tasación usually stipulated the amount of tribute that each tributary or half-tributary was responsible for furnishing.[18]

Depending on whether a town was assigned to an encomendero or held by the Crown, Indian tribute accrued either principally to a private individual or wholly to the royal treasury. The operation of encomienda represented a decentralisation of the tribute exaction and therefore conflicted with the desire of the Crown to monopolise all such relations with the Indians. It was because of the commitment of the Crown towards establishing a centralised economic order under absolute state control that a policy purposely stifling the encomienda was ardently pursued.

Like all "congregated" native peoples in Guatemala, the Indians of the Cuchumatán highlands were required under Spanish colonial law to pay tribute to their foreign masters. Tribute was payable twice each year, on the tercio de San Juan (June 24) and on the tercio de Navidad (December 25).[19] It was generally collected at the local level by caciques and *principales* who were responsible either to *encomenderos* or *corregidores* for the provision of the correct amount. Failure on the part of Indian rulers to collect the necessary quotas often resulted in their being thrown into jail.[20] Once collected, tribute, if paid in kind, was usually sold off at public auction. Monetary proceeds were then delivered to the appropriate recipients, either in the colonies or the mother country.[21]

The earliest complete *tasación de tributos* for the towns of the Cuchumatanes dates to the third quarter of the seventeenth century.[22] At this time the majority of towns in the region were still held in private *encomienda*. The total cash from the standard levy known as the *servicio de tostón* amounted to a little over 2000 pesos annually. Other payments were made with commodities such as beans, chickens, corn, cotton cloth, and palm or reed mats (*petates*). In 1768, a century later, tribute continued to be paid at least partly in kind, despite persistent demands by the Crown that all payments be made in cash.[23] By 1788, when all Indian tribute was theoretically channeled through the imperial political hierarchy to the King's coffers in Spain, the Cuchumatán *tasación* brought in rougly 8000 pesos per year and comprised approximately one-twelfth of the total Guatemalan tribute exaction.[24]

Repartimiento

The term *repartimiento*, meaning allotment, distribution, or partition, refers broadly to labour coerced from the Indians to further any number of Spanish ends. Like encomienda, the formal legal history of repartimiento is one of considerable complexity and variability, but the essential principle behind the operation of the institution remained constant and clearly defined: Spanish exploitation of the native capacity to work.[25]

Information pertaining to forced native labour in the Cuchumatán highlands is scarce. Apart from the usual problems of document survival, this deficiency may, to some degree, reflect the spatial discrimination inherent in the functioning of repartimiento. Generally, the closer an Indian town or village was to a major Spanish settlement then the more likely it was that the native inhabitants would be subjected to draft labour.[26] It is possible that certain communities in the remote Cuchumatanes were less exploited during the colonial period than other more accessible communities in highland Guatemala. By the same token, however, distance and isolation from the moderating control of responsible Crown officials in the capital city of Santiago may have prompted brutal and ruthless excesses on the part of recipients of Indian work parties in the Cuchumatán region.

Victory by the Spaniards in the wars of conquest was quickly followed by the enslavement of those Indians captured alive in the fighting. Branded as esclavos de guerra, slaves of war, the fate of this element of the native population was thereafter fixed. They were compelled to perform the hardest of labour, in mines, fields, houses, churches, and public works, with no prospect of respite. While the chronicler Fuentes y Guzmán records that slaves were taken only after the battles at Nebaj and Uspantán, it is likely that the practice occurred following every confrontation between Spanish and native forces in the Cuchumatán highlands.[27]

The right to personal service was initially an integral part of the encomienda system, and it is in this context that specific exploitation of Indian labour in the Cuchumatanes is first documented. In a lawsuit against Pedro de Alvarado in 1537, the encomendero of Huehuetenango, Juan de Espinar, stated that his encomienda included 250 slaves and the labour of 200 to 300 "indios de servicio". All were put to work in Espinar's mines in nearby Chiantla from which the encomendero derived a handsome yearly income of over 8000 pesos. In addition to those who laboured in the mines, Espinar also had Indians who worked his land and who tended his swine.[28]

The Indians of Sacapulas, also as part of their encomienda stipulation, were required to provide their encomenderos, Cristóbal Salvatierra and the younger son of Juan Paez, with four fanegas, roughly 450 lbs., of salt each month (see Appendix 2). Prior to the reforms of President Cerrato in 1549, Indians were required to haul salt from Sacapulas almost 100 kilometres south to Santiago de Guatemala. Personal service was eventually replaced at Sacapulas by an annual levy of 14 xiquipiles of cacao.[29] Since the closest source of this product was the cacao groves of Suchitepéquez in the tierra caliente far to the south, payment necessitated a migration equally as demanding as the one from Sacapulas to Santiago.[30]

Even after the Cerrato reforms, the labour component of encomienda, although greatly diminished, did not entirely disappear. The towns of Aguacatán, Jacaltenango, Soloma, and Uspantán continued at mid-sixteenth century to provide their encomenderos with "indios de servicio" who tended swine and flocks of sheep.[31]

Although repartimiento, except in relation to mining and public works, was legally abolished one-third of the way through the seventeenth century,[32] there are several instances of its continued existence throughout the colonial period in the Cuchumatanes. Indians were frequently called upon to "freely contribute" towards the maintenance of roads and trails, and as late as 1770 were being forced to act as human carriers.[33] Similarly, there were repeated requests for repartimientos of Indians to work as shepherds for Cuchumatán landholders.[34] And on at least three occasions, during the Lacandón entradas of 1685 and 1695, and in the expedition to quell the Tzeltal uprising in Chiapas in 1712, Cuchumatán Indians served as guides, pack bearers, and auxiliaries for the Spanish military forces.[35]

If the legal abolition of repartimiento in 1632 did not precipitate the total disappearance of forced native labour, it nonetheless reduced the occurrence of some of the more blatant forms of exploitation. By this time, however, most Spaniards who depended for a livelihood on Indian labour had developed a subtle but equally pernicious system of coercion: debt peonage. The essential features of this contract have been succinctly expressed by Charles Gibson:

> In peonage, a condition of indebtedness gave an employer a legal (or semilegal) opportunity to compel a laborer to work. Spaniards began by loaning small sums to impoverished Indians, with the understanding that the loan represented an advance on wages. Repayment could be made only through work. But work was what the employer desired, and he saw to it that his position as creditor remained secure. Additional loans were made before the original debt could be discharged, and through recurrent transactions the Indian was held to a lifetime of labor. Indebtedness still outstanding at the time of the worker's death might be inherited by his children, and entire families might thus be held in bondage generation after generation.[36]

Debt peonage was a typically seventeenth century institution devised to maximise Spanish control of a native work force drastically depleted because of its vulnerability to diseases introduced by the Europeans. Indian labourers, so numerous during the first 50 years after conquest, were by the early seventeenth century a scarce and valuable resource worthy of protection. Debt peonage offered such "protection". The system was common throughout Central America and in the Cuchumatanes was particularly prolific on the sheep farms of the Altos de Chiantla. Here the families of Indian shepherds were tied to their Spanish landlords by a wage of 12 reales and four handouts of corn each month.[37]

Through the operation of encomienda, the tasación de tributos, and repartimiento, a burden of considerable gravity was placed on the Indians by their Spanish masters. These devices, and others such as the derrama, the reparto de efectos, and the salutación,[38] kept the native population in a condition of servility throughout the colonial period. The lot of the Indian commoner in pre-Conquest times was certainly one of onerous subjugation, but in all probability life under Spanish rule was significantly more burdensome. Historian Benjamin Keen offers the following explanation:

> Spanish demands for labor and tribute were immeasurably greater than before the Conquest, simply, aside from other reasons, because pre-Conquest tribute demands were limited by the capacity of the native ruling classes to consume the fruits of tribute and labor, whereas the Spanish demands, aimed at the accumulation of wealth in monetary form, were quite unlimited.[39]

Encomienda, the tasación de tributos, and repartimiento were key elements in the Spanish exploitation of the Indian peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands. Imposition of the encomienda system required specific towns to furnish privileged individuals with labour and tribute. Encomenderos put Indians to work at various tasks: labouring in mines, hauling loads from one region to another, tilling fields, and tending flocks. Some of these tasks introduced the Indians to things they had never seen or known before: horses, sheep, goats, pigs, chickens, and the cultivation of wheat, the Spanish staple so different from the native corn. Twice yearly, Indian towns paid commodity tribute either to private encomenderos or to the Crown. Even in times of dire hardship, after a drought, an earthquake, an invasion of locusts, or an outbreak of disease, Indian towns received little sympathy or concession from officials intent on collecting tribute.[40] Some years may have been so grim that entering into debt peonage with a Spanish landholder represented a lesser evil than remaining a tributary of the Crown in an Indian village.[41]

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

[1] The word *encomienda* is derived from the Spanish verb *encomendar*, which means "to entrust". *Encomiendas* were *not* grants of land but rather titles to the right to receive tribute. The title to an *encomienda* carried with it certain obligations,among which was the instruction of the Catholic faith to the Indians held in *encomienda*.

The standard work in English on the institution is that by L.B. Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain: The Beginnings of Spanish Mexico*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966). Other important contributions to *encomienda* literature include S. Zavala, *La Encomienda Indiana*, (Madrid, 1935), and *De Encomiendas y Propriedad Territorial en Algunas Regiones de la América Española*, (Mexico, 1940); R.S. Chamberlain, "Castilian Backgrounds of the Repartimiento-Encomienda", *Contributions to American Anthropology and History*, 5, No. 25, (Washington: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1939), pp. 23-66; F.A. Kirkpatrick, "Repartimiento-Encomienda", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 21 (1939), pp. 372-379; C. Gibson, *Spain in America*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 48-67; and J. Lockhart, "Encomienda and Hacienda: The Evolution of the Great Estate in the Spanish Indies", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 49 (1969), pp. 411-429). A splendid analysis of *encomienda* in a regional context is contained in C. Gibson's seminal work, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 58-81 and 413-434.

[2] The six towns held in *encomienda* by either *conquistadores* or their offspring were Todos Santos Cuchumatán, Sacapulas, Soloma, Jacaltenango, Aguacatán, and Huehuetennago. Todos Santos was held, in part, by the younger sons of Marcos Ruíz. Ruíz participated in the conquest of Mexico under the leadership of Hernán Cortés and in the conquest of Guatemala under Pedro de Alvarado; cf. AGI:Patronato 82-1-4. All of Aguacatán and half of Sacapulas were held by the yonger son of Juan Paez. Paez, like Ruíz, was a veteran of campaigns in both Mexico and Guatemama; cf. AGI:Patronato 68-2-3. Jacaltenango was held by the younger son of Gonzalo de Ovalle. Ovalle was a prominent figure in the conquest of Guatemala furnishing, at his own expense, men, weapons, and horses for the *entrada* of 1524. He later served as the *alcalde mayor* of Chiapas under the rapacious Francisco de Montejo; cf. AGI:Patronato 75-2-5 and P. Gerhard, *The Southeast Frontier of New Spain*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 152-153. Soloma was held jointly by Diego de Alvarado and Juan de Castrogui, the former being one of the many "hijos naturales" of the *conquistador* Pedro de Alvarado. Diego

claimed that the encomienda of Soloma came to him by virtue of lawful inheritance from his father. This suggests, therefore, that Pedro de Alvarado had himself, between 1524 and 1541, held the encomienda of Soloma as part of his impressive private estate; cf. AGI:Justicia 280-4. Huehuetenango, the most prestigious encomienda in the entire Cuchumatán region, was held by the conquistador Juan de Espinar. Rumoured to be a hosier by trade, Espinar fought with distinction in the conquests of both Mexico and Guatemala. His contribution in the latter campaign gained him such a highly-prized encomienda; cf. W.L. Sherman, Forced Native Labor in Sixteenth-Century Central America, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), p. 388.

[3] AGCA, A1.39, leg. 1751, folios 78v, 81v, 192v, and 211.

[4] AGCA, A1, leg. 1752, folio 17v.

[5] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 2890, exp. 42579, 42580, 42581 and 42587.

[6] AGI:AG 128; AGCA, A3, leg. 2863, exp. 41698; F.A. de Fuentes y Guzmán, Recordación Florida, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Tomo CCLIX, 1972), pp. 47-48 and 349; and Sherman, op. cit., p. 92.

[7] AGCA, A3, leg. 2863, exp. 41698. Pimentel's landholdings around Huehuetenango are discussed in Chapter Seven.

[8] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 2808, exp. 40633.

[9] AGI:AG 966.

[10] A major part of Chapter Eight is devoted to the study of the demographic collapse of the Indian population of the Cuchumatán highlands due to the ravages of epidemic disease.

[11] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391.

[12] AGCA, A1, leg. 1752, folio 17v.

[13] AGCA, A3, leg. 2863, exp. 41698.

[14] Cf. Gibson, Spain in America, op. cit., p. 118; "Historians once took the position that hacienda developed directly from the declining encomienda. The two histories are now regarded as distinct".

[15] Lockhart, op. cit., p. 416.

[16] M.J. MacLeod, Spanish Central America: A Socio-economic History, 1520-1720, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 293.

[17] AGCA, A1, leg. 1752, folio 17v.

[18] S.F. Cook and W. Borah, Essays in Population History, Vol. 1, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 17-25.

[19] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 246, exp. 4912.

[20] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., p. 18, records that failure to collect the appropriate amount of tribute in the Ixil country at the end of the seventeenth century resulted in the imprisonment of six Indian alcaldes.

[21] MacLeod, op. cit., p. 131.

[22] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391.

[23] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 501, exp. 10261 and 10263.

[24] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 246, exp. 4912. According to M. Wortman, "Government Revenue and Economic Trends in Central America", Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 55, No. 2, May 1975, p. 277, the total government revenue from the Indian tribute of Guatemala in the early nineteenth century "averaged almost 100,000 pesos annually". Indian tribute was one of the four major sources of Crown income in Central America, the other three being (i) revenue from government monopolies such as tobacco, liquor, and playing cards; (ii) taxes on trade and commerce; and (iii) the state's share of the church tithe.

[25] As with encomienda, much of our present understanding of repartimiento is due to the research of L.B. Simpson. His Studies in the Administration of New Spain, Ibero-Americana No. 13, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1938), is an important contribution. Gibson, Spain in America, op. cit., pp. 143-147, contains a general review of the institution. Sherman, op. cit., pp. 191-207, studies the operation of repartimiento in a specifically Central American context, as does MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 207-209 and 295-296.

[26] MacLeod, op. cit., p. 295.

[27] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 21-22. Sherman, op. cit., pp. 15-82, has a full discussion of slavery in sixteenth century Central America.

[28] Sherman, op. cit., pp. 71, 92, 289 and 444; and Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

[29] A xiquipil was a basic Indian measure of 8,000 cacao beans. Three xiquipiles equalled about as much as a tameme, an Indian porter, could carry. It would therefore have taken the labour of five able-bodied men to carry the necessary tribute from Suchitepéquez to Sacapulas, a distance of roughly 100 kilometres. Cf. J.F. Bergmann, "The Distribution of Cacao Cultivation in Pre-Columbian America", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 59, No. 1, March 1969, pp. 87-91.

[30] AGI:AG 128.

[31] AGI:AG 128.

[32] W. Borah, New Spain's Century of Depression, Ibero-Americana No. 35, (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951), pp. 39-40.

[33] AGCA, A1, leg. 1557, exp. 10201; A1.22.33, leg. 2891, exp. 26645; and A1.21.8, leg. 190, exp. 3860.

[34] AGCA, A3, leg. 2775, exp. 40090; A3.12, leg. 224, exp. 4012; and A3.12, leg. 226, exp. 4084.

[35] A. Recinos, Monografía del Departamento de Huehuetenango, (Guatemala: Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1954), pp. 385-389; AGI:AG 225; and AGCA, A1.12, leg. 6095, exp. 55413 and A.1.22, leg. 3024, exp. 29157.

[36] Gibson, Spain in America, op. cit., p. 147.

[37] AGCA, A3, leg. 2775, exp. 40090, and A1.24, leg. 6096, exp. 55491. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 225, citing a document dated 1598, states the following: "One farmer in Huehuetenango seemed to have had all the males and some of the females of an Indian village tied up in petty obligations to him". It is possible, however, that the misery of debt peonage was more attractive to the Indians than the hardships of life in their local communities. Borah, op. cit., p. 42, looks at the issue from this

alternative perspective: "Colonial labor relations were often attended by oppression, cruelty, and exploitation. However, debt peonage did not necessarily mean a downward step for the laborer. If he was bound to an employer, he was at least reserved for the service of that employer and protected to a considerable measure from the extortions to which he had been subject as a member of the Indian community. He was no longer required to assist in supporting the oppressive Indian nobility and the often elaborate and expensive community activities. If the local friars or secular priests were minded to make use of his services, they had to contend with the employer-creditor, who was not likely to permit inroads upon his labor supply. Furthermore, if only as a necessary worker, the debt peon probably got protection against exactions by itinerant Spaniards and local officials, who often added extra burdens to Indian life in the native towns. It is thus entirely conceivable that debt peonage meant an improvement in the lives of many of the laborers".

[38] The derrama was a system whereby local officials bought goods cheaply and then sold them to the Indians, whether they wanted them or not, at greatly inflated prices. The reverse of this practice was to purchase goods from Indians at rock-bottom prices and then resell them for a handsome profit. Cf. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 316. The reparto de efectos was a similar device which commonly involved a local official distributing raw cotton among his women charges and compelling them to spin it into thread and then to weave it into mantas. This was a form of extortion practised by many of the alcaldes mayores of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango, particularly in the more remote communities of the Cuchumatanes. Cf. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 316; Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., p. 35, in relation to Cuilco; P. Cortés y Larraz, Descripción Geográfico-Moral de la Diocesis de Goathemala, (Guatemala: Sociedad de Geografía e Historia, 1958), Vol. II, pp. 49-50 and 123-124, in relation to Nebaj and Soloma; Recinos, op. cit., pp. 214-215, in relation to Santa Eulalia, San Mateo Ixtatán, San Juan Ixcoy, and Aguacatán; and AGCA, A1.14.16, leg. 4064, exp. 31664 (Cuilco); A1.24, leg. 1573, exp. 10217 (Sacapulas); A1.14.25, leg. 190, exp. 3864 (San Juan Ixcoy, San Sebastián Coatán, San Miguel Acatán, and San Pedro Soloma); and A3.12, leg. 2897, exp. 43013 (Soloma). The salutación was an illegal tax which Indians were forced to pay priests or officials who passed through their town or village. Cf. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 315.

[39] B. Keen, quoted from personal correspondence in Sherman, op. cit., p. 456.

[40] AGCA, A1.1, leg. 6111, exp. 56055; A3.16, leg. 2901, exp. 43258; A3.16, leg. 252, exp. 5161; A3.16, leg. 2899, exp. 43064; A3.16, leg. 2899, exp. 43044; A3.16, leg. 249, exp. 5036; and A1.14.7, leg. 386, exp. 8037.

[41] AGCA, A1.24, leg. 6096, exp. 55491.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MAN AND THE LAND: PATTERNS OF SPANISH AND INDIAN LANDHOLDING AND LAND USE

> To the land which nourishes him, which was the home of his ancestors ... and the place which they still frequent in spirit, the Indian is attached by feelings of passionate intensity.
>
> Ruth Bunzel (1952).

Introduction

Scholars have long recognised that the hacienda, or landed estate, has played a significant role in the political, economic, social, and cultural development of many parts of Spanish America.[1] Of particular importance in the context of colonial Mexico or New Spain have been the contributions of Woodrow Borah and François Chevalier on this subject.[2] Both writers contend that the emergence of the hacienda was contemporaneous with a period of marked demographic and economic depression lasting from the late sixteenth until the late seventeenth century, and suggest that the two events are intimately linked. Once created, the hacienda cast a long and oppressive shadow. In the words of Borah:

> At the end of the seventeenth century, the distinctively Mexican economy was already organized on the basis of latifundia and debt peonage, the twin aspects of Mexican life which continued nearly to our day and which helped provoke the Revolution of 1910-1917.[3]

That colonial Central America also experienced a seventeenth century demographic and economic crisis characterised by a pronounced tendency on the part of resident Spaniards to take up land has been impressively documented by Murdo MacLeod.[4] According to MacLeod, however, Spanish interest in the acquisition of land was more intense south and east of Santiago de Guatemala than north and west of the capital, due chiefly to the greater accessibility, fertility, and entrepreneurial potential of the former region compared to the latter.[5] As in Mexico, the consequences of the seventeenth century depression were far reaching:

> The Central America of the seventeenth-century depression was rural, self-sufficient, poor for the most part, fragmented politically and economically, and culturally introverted. It was during this period that the basis was laid for the modern political and economic divisions of the area, and for the cultural cleavage between [the] "Indian" [northwest] and [the] ladino [southeast] which hampers Guatemalan nationhood to this day.[6]

Contrary to the thesis of hacienda origin and dominance postulated by Borah, Chevalier, and MacLeod, the research of William Taylor in the Valley of Oaxaca indicates that although the familiar colonial features of large Spanish estates, landless Indians, and debt peonage were certainly to be found, they were neither common nor characteristic.[7] Haciendas owned and operated by Spaniards did emerge, but Indians still controlled two-thirds of the agricultural land of the region during the last century of colonial rule.[8] Taylor suggests that such a significant departure from the findings of Chevalier in particular may simply reflect the deficiencies of an overgeneralised model which fails to take into proper account the nuances of time and place. An awareness of regional variation, Taylor maintains, is all-important: "What holds for the Valley of Oaxaca in 1750 is unlikely to hold for Colima in 1800".[9] Colonial landholding in highland Guatemala, Taylor speculates, may approach a middle ground between the extremes represented by the Chevalier or "North Mexican" model and the example of the Valley of Oaxaca.[10]

The purpose of this chapter is to reconstruct the broad patterns of Spanish and Indian landholding in the Cuchumatán highlands between conquest and independence. In reconstructing this vital aspect of the cultural landscape of colonial times, an attempt will be made to interpret the evidence in the context of the issues outlined above.

Patterns of Spanish Landholding

In his landmark work on colonial Central America, MacLeod has convincingly demonstrated that the Spanish conquistadores and primeros pobladores (first settlers) of the region were not men motivated primarily by feudal ambitions. Rather, they were initially much more entrepreneurial and mercantile in their interests. Only when exploitation of the work of others proved, if not without profit certainly not as lucrative as anticipated, did Spaniards focus attention on the land and concentrate on the establishment of rural estates. Control of labour, therefore, was for much of the sixteenth century considered more important than control of land. Thus an emphasis was placed during the early period of Spanish rule on such human-oriented exploitative devices as encomienda and repartimiento.[11]

Spanish interest in the Cuchumatán highlands parallels closely the general pattern of exploitation and involvement developed by MacLeod. There was an initial flurry of excitement over the possibility that the region might contain significant mineral wealth, but this early promise never materialised. The gold of Pichiquil and San Francisco Motozintla proved more mythical than real.[12] Silver was plentiful enough at Chiantla to provide the first Spaniard to exploit the local ores, Juan de Espinar, with a handsome return of 8700 pesos in 1573,[13] but this level of profit was not long maintained. The mines of Chiantla continued to produce modest quantities of silver and lead throughout the colonial period,[14] but the scale and output of the operation was far less significant than that of Central Honduras, and nothing at all like those of Guanajuato and Zacatecas in the Viceroyalty of New Spain or Potosí in the Viceroyalty of Peru. By the close of the sixteenth century it was apparent to the few Spaniards who decided to retain an interest in the Cuchumatanes that greater security and better prospects lay in taking up land than in coercing an ever-diminishing native work force to render labour in marginal mining enterprises.

Among the very earliest titles to land in the Cuchumatán region were four awards made between November 1563 and May 1564 to the encomendero of Huehuetenango, Luis Manuel Pimentel. The first award (see Appendix 4) was for two caballerías of land near Huehuetenango to be used to cultivate wheat. A charge of 500 pesos was made for the title. It was also stipulated that the land had to be fully cultivated within two years, and that no sale of property could occur until four years had passed. A second title (see Appendix 5) to two caballerías near Chiantla was granted for land to grow corn, at the same cost and carrying similar restrictions regarding property sale. Two further titles (see Appendix 6 and Appendix 7) were made for grazing land near Huehuetenango to raise sheep, goats, cattle, horses, and mules. All four titles awarded to Pimentel stated that the land was allocated sin perjuicio ("without harm") to the Indians, and that the grants did not conflict with the legal claims of any other party. In addition to landed property, Pimentel also acquired ownership of a water mill in Huehuetenango which had formerly belonged to Juan de Espinar.[15]

The move by Manuel Pimentel to take up land in the vicinity of Huehuetenango apparently did not immediately influence other Spaniards to do likewise, for there is a lengthy hiatus in land acquisition between the 1560s and the end of the sixteenth century. The start of the seventeenth century, however, marked the beginning of a spate of interest in Cuchumatán landholding that continued for the remainder of the colonial era.

The period of time between the early seventeenth and the early eighteenth century witnessed the taking up of land in the Cuchumatanes through composición, a policy by which an impecunious treasury either sold royal land (tierras realengas) or legalised an irregular land title on the payment of a fee. The proclivity of the Crown towards this policy meant that Spaniards could illegally usurp Indian holdings in the knowledge that a small monetary contribution to the royal treasury was all that was needed to legalise the seizure. At least 24 composiciones, amounting to over 165 caballerías of land, are recorded for properties in the Cuchumatán highlands between 1607 and 1726 (see Table 7). The chronology of these grants of land coincides closely with the years of the Central American economic depression and, as MacLeod has indicated, likely reflects the flight to a humble, rural self-sufficiency on the part of town dwellers frustrated by the events and circumstances of seventeenth century colonial life.[16]

During the seventeenth century depression Spaniards were more attracted to the lands south and east of Santiago

TABLE 7

MEDIDAS AND COMPOSICIONES OF SPANISH LANDHOLDINGS IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS (1607-1726)

Year	Location of Holding	Extent of Holding	Recipient	AGCA Source
1607	Between Aguacatán, Chiantla, and San Juan Ixcoy	-	Francisco Rodriguez	A1, Exp. 51931 leg. 5937
1623	2 leagues from Cuilco	12 caballerías	Sebastián Montes de Oca	A1, Exp. 51953 leg. 5939
1628	Los Altos de Chiantla	18 caballerías	Bartolomé Ponce	A1, Exp. 51964 leg. 5939
1652	Patziquichi, vicinity of Santa Ana Malacatán	2 caballerías	Melchor Gonzales de Mazanegos	A1, Exp. 52010 leg. 5943
1670	Between Chiantla and Aguacatán	2 caballerías	Alférez José Peréz de la Plata	A1, Exp. 52054 leg. 5946
1670	Between Chiantla, Aguacatán, and Todos Santos Cuchumatán	9-1/2 caballerías	José de Alvarado Bracamonte	A1, Exp. 52055 leg. 5946
1670	Chiantla, near to the Cerro Chancol on the Altos de Aguacatán	10-1/2 caballerías	Juan López de Mata	A1, Exp. 52056 leg. 5946
1676	Vicinity of San Juan Ixcoy	7 caballerías	Melchor Rodriguez	A1, Exp. 52087 leg. 5948
1683	Between Chiantla and Tazal-Bentic	8-1/2 caballerías	Pedro Chávez	A1, Exp. 52106 leg. 5949
1684	Altos de Cuchumatán	2 caballerías	Pedro Nolasco	A1.57, Exp. 55405 leg. 6095
1685	5-6 leagues from Todos Santos Cuchumatán and San Juan Ixcoy	5-1/2 caballerías	Melchor de Mencos	A1, Exp. 52111 leg. 5949
1704	Huehuetenango	16 caballerías	Tomás García de Medina	A1.80, Exp. 52241 leg. 5959
1705	Huehuetenango	3 caballerías	Antonia de Leon	A1.24, Exp. 10218 leg. 1574
1705	Huehuetenango	6 caballerías	Andrés de Leon	A1, Exp. 52252 leg. 5960
1706	Huehuetenango	5-1/2 caballerías	Ana Maria de Mazariegos	A1.24, Exp. 10219 leg. 1575
1706	Huehuetenango	3 caballerías	Antonio Cifuentes	A1.24, Exp. 10219 leg. 1575
1706	Huehuetenango	19 caballerías	María de Vides	A1.24, Exp. 10219 leg. 1575
1706	Huehuetenango	6 caballerías	García de Medina	A1.24, Exp. 10219 leg. 1575
1707	Chiantla	5 caballerías	Domingo García Moscoso	A1, Exp. 10220, leg. 1576
1708	Jacaltenango	7 caballerías	Convento de Jacaltenango	A1.24, Exp. 10221 leg. 1577
1711	Between Chiantla and Aguacatán	4 caballerías	Domingo García de Moscoso	A1.24, Exp. 10222 leg. 1578
1714	Huehuetenango	2 caballerías	Duarte Fernandez de Hidalgo	A1.57, Exp. 48171 leg. 5757
1717	Valley of Sahcajah, Huehuetenango	10 caballerías	Antonia de Leon	A1.24, Exp. 10226 leg. 1582
1726	Tepequigüil, San Andrés Cuilco	2 caballerías	Domingo Ramírez	A1.24, Exp. 10229 leg. 1585

de Guatemala where, in addition to staples such as wheat, fruit, and vegetables, indigo could be cultivated as a cash crop and cattle raised as a source of hides and meat. Although the highlands to the north and west of the capital --rugged, isolated, certainly offering subsistence possibilities but with little potential for cash cropping--were not so significantly encroached upon, there were pockets in this region containing excellent grazing and pasture land. The Spaniards who took up land in the Cuchumatanes, particularly on the lofty plateau known as the Altos de Chiantla, soon recognised that holdings in these remote parts could not only be farmed but could also be profitably exploited for the raising of livestock, especially sheep.

One of the first important landholders on the Altos de Chiantla was Baltasar de Herrera who, at the time of penning his will in 1687, owned the _hacienda_ known as Nuestra Señora del Rosario Changacux Chémal y Saxbalá. A property then of some 15 _caballerías_, El Rosario supported over 2000 head of sheep in addition to some horses and cattle.[17] After the death of Herrera, El Rosario was taken over by his son-in-law, _Alférez_ Domingo Moscoso Balmaior. An ambitious and enterprising individual, Moscoso sought to gain control over as much of the Altos de Chiantla as possible. Early in the eighteenth century he acquired the lands and livestock of José Alvarado Bracamonte and Melchor Rodriguez Mazariegos (see Table 7) and by 1711 owned over 69 _caballerías_ of prime pasture land. The Moscoso holdings at that time supported over 12,000 head of sheep.[18]

When Moscoso died he left his estate to his wife, Lucrecia de Herrera. She penned her will on September 9, 1725, and listed as Moscoso property the three finest *haciendas* of the Altos de Chiantla: El Rosario, La Capellanía, and Chancol. El Rosario contained 10,600 sheep, 500 mares, 400 cows, 300 horses, 15 mules, and 2 donkeys, as well as a number of houses for resident Indian workers, the *casa grande* of the *patrón*, and a richly decorated chapel. La Capellanía raised over 5000 sheep, 300 mares, and several mules. Chancol comprised 10 to 12 *caballerías* of quality pasture which had been purchased from Tomás García de Medina for 600 pesos.[19]

On the death of Doña Lucrecia, the Moscoso holdings were passed on to her brother-in-law, Juan Martínez de la Vega. When he compiled his last will and testimony on February 27, 1744, the following Cuchumatán properties had been added to his estate:

Sajpojolá: An *hacienda* of 13-1/2 *caballerías* which was purchased for 1350 pesos from Doña Micaela de la Parra, widow of Sebastián Antonio de Aguayo.

San Antonio Musmul: A *terreno* of 9 *caballerías* bought from Pedro de Chavéz.

Baco de Anco: A *terreno* of 5 *caballerías* near Todos Santos Cuchumatán and San Juan Ixcoy.

Xebuyugüitz: An *hacienda* of 17 *caballerías* purchased from the heirs of Juan López de los Ríos.

Tuhuinimá: 5 *caballerías* of land in the Río de las Vueltas.

Los Cheches: 5 *caballerías* of land on the Altos de Chiantla overlooking Aguacatán.

These properties, along with the former Moscoso holdings, amounted to a sizeable estate of some 137-1/2 caballerías which supported 30,000 sheep, 1000 cattle, 1000 mares, 180 horses, 400 pigs, 49 mules, and 5 pairs of oxen.[20]

Although Martínez de la Vega left some property to the Church, his daughters Manuela and Juana received the bulk of the estate. To Manuela, the wife of Manuel Francisco de Fuenlabrada, was left Hacienda El Rosario, while Juana, the wife of Marcelo de Noriega, received Hacienda Chancol. Juana later sold Chancol to her brother-in-law, Fuenlabrada, for the sum of 7,287 pesos and 4 reales. The livestock component of the transaction was broken down as follows:

7900 sheep at 3 reales a head
1315 rams at 4 reales a head
182 mares at 2 pesos a head
20 one-year old colts at 3 pesos a head
20 stallions at 5 pesos a head
10 stallions at 4 pesos a head
18 goats at 3 reales a head
70 pigs at 1 peso a head
25 pigs at 4 reales a head
6 mules at 8 pesos a head

The sale of Chancol also included a payment of 270 pesos by which Fuenlabrada assumed the debt of the Indian shepherds, farmers, and servants who worked on the hacienda and who had received money as an advance on wages.[21]

After Fuenlabrada's death, in 1750 or 1751, his widow Manuela sold both Chancol and El Rosario to Francisco Ignacio de Barrutia of Santiago de Guatemala. The combined extent of the two haciendas was then almost 200 cabellerías and the transaction was negotiated under the following terms: 4,431 pesos for land; 1,017 pesos for the chapel of Nuestra Señora del Rosario with all its jewels and ornaments; and 14,029 pesos for livestock, grain, wool, farm equipment, and houses. Barrutia then set out to incorporate, by aggressive and systematic buying, the greater part of the Altos de Chiantla into one single property. By the end of the eighteenth century his holdings amounted to an impressive 500 caballerías containing excellent cropland, rich pasture, plentiful water, fine stand of timber, and producing high quality grain, cheese, and livestock.[22]

The retreat to the countryside characteristic of the long years of the seventeenth century depression therefore marked the beginning of significant Spanish interest in taking up the land. In the Cuchumatanes the process of expansion was somewhat delayed, but by the late seventeenth century Spaniards were present in important numbers. They were especially attracted to the ranching possibilities of the Altos de Chiantla. The majority of those holding land were private individuals, but the Church was also involved in the carving up of Cuchumatán pastures (see Appendix 8). The return to more prosperous times in the eighteenth century witnessed a handful of men emerging as wealthy owners of estates on the Altos de Chiantla, where sheep, cattle, horses, and mules were raised by Indians bound to their hacendados by debt peonage. The creation of sizeable Spanish holdings in the Cuchumatanes, however, was not undertaken entirely at the expense of the territorial integrity of Indian communities of the region.

Patterns of Indian Landholding

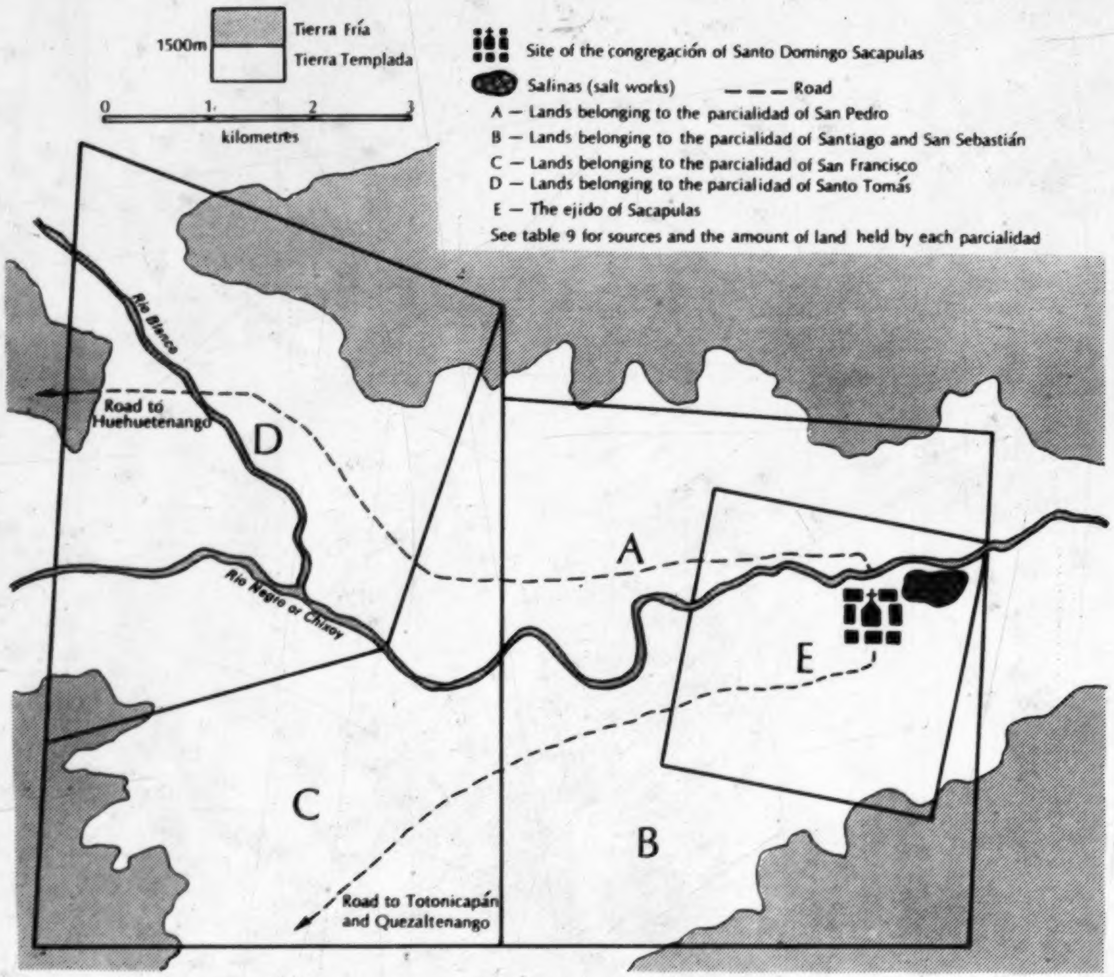
Under the policy of congregación, the Indians settled at a new town site were legally entitled to an allotment of land from which to derive basic subsistence. Included in this allotment were both arable tracts and an area designated "ejido", uncultivated land held in common by the Indians and used by them for cutting firewood, grazing livestock, hunting animals, and gathering the various products of the forest. In addition to the "new" lands in the vicinity of congregaciones, the Indians continued to cultivate the "old" lands surrounding their former homes in the mountains, although seldom with a legal title to do so. Throughout the colonial period, therefore, a fundamental division existed in the pattern of native land tenure between "new" lands around congregaciones and "old" lands some distance away.[23]

Indian towns and villages usually held land under a communal title, and often successfully solicited the Spanish authorities for territorial extensions beyond the standard one league ejido allocation (see Appendix 9). In order to maintain a firm legal standing, many communities periodically updated or "composed" their titles by payments to a penurious Crown, thus lessening the risk of encroachment by Spaniards or Ladinos; the Indian común of Sacapulas as late as 1789 paid 143 pesos for a composición de tierras.[24]

Within certain congregaciones, a classic example being that of Sacapulas, land was held not only by the community as a whole but also by calpul or parcialidad (see Map 5 and Table 9), with each tributary actually owning and working an individual family plot and retaining a strong sense of autochthonous identity.[25] Some land was also set aside for the upkeep of cofradías, religious fraternities or sodalities devoted to the veneration of a particular Catholic saint. Many Cuchumatán cofradías, in Aguacatán, Chiantla, Huehuetenango, Sacapulas, and Soloma, held land on which cattle and sheep were raised with a view to financing specific celebrations and festivities centred on the parish church.[26]

The wealthiest members of native society were the lineage heads known as caciques and principales. These Indian leaders were often awarded private grants of land in recognition of their elite status and for performing such services as the collection of Crown or encomendero tribute (see Table 8 and Appendix 10). Although no cacicazgos (cacique estates) emerged in the Cuchumatanes to compare with those developed by high-ranking lineages in the Valley of Oaxaca, a number of native rulers were conspicuously better placed than the members of the común. One such individual in the late seventeenth century was Pedro Hernández, an "indio natural" of Santiago Chimaltenango who, according to Fuentes y Guzmán, had an impressive personal estate comprised of land, livestock, and "no small amount of money".[27]

An important feature of Indian landholding in several remote Cuchumatán communities was the cultivation


1500m
Tierra Fría
Tierra Templada
0
1
2
3
kilometres
Site of the congregación of Santo Domingo Sacapulas
Salinas (salt works)
Road
A — Lands belonging to the parcialidad of San Pedro
B — Lands belonging to the parcialidad of Santiago and San Sebastián
C — Lands belonging to the parcialidad of San Francisco
D — Lands belonging to the parcialidad of Santo Tomás
E — The ejido of Sacapulas
See table 9 for sources and the amount of land held by each parcialidad
Río Blanco
Road to Huehuetenango
D
A
Río Negro or Chixoy
E
C
B
Road to Totonicapán and Quezaltenango

MAP 5 INDIAN LANDHOLDING AT SANTO DOMINGO SACAPULAS IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

TABLE 8

MEDIDAS AND COMPOSICIONES OF LAND GRANTED TO INDIAN CACIQUES AND PRINCIPALES IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS (1600-1711)

Year	Location of Holding	Extent of Holding	Recipient	AGCA Source
1600	Vicinity of Chiantla	19-1/2 caballerías	Antonio, Francisco, and Luis de Mendoza	Al Exp. 51906 leg. 5935
1628	Vicinity of Todos Santos Cuchumatán	6 caballerías	Juan de Herrera	Al Exp. 51965 leg. 5940
1705	Vicinity of Chiantla	4 caballerías	Baltasar Jiminez Celaju	Al Exp. 10218 leg. 1574
				Al Exp. 52250 leg. 5960
1711	Vicinity of Aguacatán	14 caballerías	Pedro y Sebastián de Escovar	Al Exp. 10222 leg. 1578

TABLE 9

INDIAN LANDHOLDING, BY CALPUL OR PARCIALIDAD, IN THE TOWN OF SACAPULAS (c. 1775-1795)

Calpul or Parcialidad	Amount of Land[1]	No. of Tributarios in Calpul
San Pedro	71c. 251-2/3 ca.	67
Santiago and San Sebastián	42c. 156 ca.	141
Santo Tomás	121c. 146-2/3 ca.	60
San Francisco	78c. 237 ca.	98

[1] In caballerías (c.) and cuerdas (ca.):

1 caballería = 105 acres,
1 cuerda = 0.1 acres.

Note: In addition to the above lands owned individually by calpul or parcialidad was an ejido allocation of 38 caballerías and 183-1/3 cuerdas.

Source: AGCA A1, leg. 6060, exp. 53305 and leg. 6044, exp. 53348.

of uninhabited lowland areas to the west, north, and east of the highland congregaciones. The seasonal migration down from the Cuchumatanes to fertile tierra templada or tierra caliente in adjacent Lacandón country was a long-established practice among the Indians of Santa Eulalia, and was also characteristic of other communities, including San Sebastián Coatán, San Juan Cotzal, and San Gaspar Chajul.[28] Three or four leagues distant from the congregaciones, these lands in addition to fine yields of corn and chile also produced cacao, cotton, sugar cane, and a wealth of tropical fruits that could not be grown in the tierra fría of the highlands. Because of this significant ecological asset, Indian settlements along the northern Cuchumatán frontier with the unpacified Lacandones were apparently never plagued by a serious shortage of cultivable land.[29]

The luxury of expanding on to virgin agricultural territory, however, was not enjoyed by the myriad Indian communities along the southern edge of the Cuchumatanes. In these parts, as elsewhere in highland Guatemala, land was much more scarce, due chiefly to a greater density of native population and the closer proximity of Spanish and Ladino settlers who could encroach upon Indian holdings. Thus the Indians of San Sebastián Huehuetenango, in 1741 and 1811, petitioned the Crown for more land in view of the inability of existing resources to support their rising numbers.[30] Similarly, the Indians of Huehuetenango in 1812 requested that they be given a sum of money in order to buy _tierras realengas_ with which to supplement their present community holdings, since much of their _ejido_ had been taken over by land-hungry Ladinos. The Indians also complained bitterly about "the enormous animals, owned by our Ladino neighbours, which invade our fields and destroy our crops".[31] Land was therefore at a greater premium in the southern margins of the Cuchumatanes than in the remote northern reaches adjacent to sparsely settled tropical lowlands. Not surprisingly, disputes over land ownership were both more prolific and more intense in the south than in the north (see Table 10 and Table 11).

Land Disputes (1705-1821)

Extant archival documentation indicates that conflict between Spaniards and Indians over ownership of land in the Cuchumatanes was most significant during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (see Table 10). Disputes between the two factions doubtless arose during earlier times but were more pronounced between 1700 and 1821 for two reasons: first, it was during this period that the native population began its slow numerical recovery after the demographic collapse brought about by the Spanish conquest, thus precipitating a need for more land to feed more people; and second, the years 1700-1821 marked a period of interest in taking up the land on the part of Spaniards and Ladinos who, in emerging from a severe economic depression, saw in landholding both a desirable security and a capacity for some degree of self-sufficiency.

TABLE 10

LAND DISPUTES BETWEEN SPANIARDS AND INDIAN TOWNS IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS (1705-1820)

Year	Contestants	AGCA Source
1705	Juan Martínez de la Vega versus Chiantla	A1, leg. 5960, exp. 52251
1737	Juan Martínez de la Vega versus Todos Santos Cuchumatán	A1, leg. 3025, exp. 29183 A1, leg. 5976, exp. 52505
1772-1779	Mateo Morales and Juan José Franco versus San Pedro Necta	A1, leg. 6018, exp. 53040 A1, leg. 6102, exp. 55702 A1, leg. 2899, exp. 26827
1775	Nicolas Recinos versus Indians of San Sebastián Huehuetenango	A1, leg. 6021, exp. 53075
1777	Pedro Henriquez versus Santa María Cunén	A1, leg. 6022, exp. 53093
1793	Parish priest of Huehuetenango versus San Pedro Necta	A1, leg. 6040, exp. 53302
1803	Ladino community versus Indian community (Huehuetenango)	A1, leg. 6092, exp. 55333
1808	Luis Aguilar versus Indian communities of Jacalteñango parish	A1, leg. 2919, exp. 27230
1813	José Domingo Franco versus San Sebastián Coatán	A1, leg. 6052, exp. 53498
1814	Nolberzo Zamallorga versus Indian community of Huehuetenango	A1, leg. 6117, exp. 56583
1816	Hacienda San Lucás y San Antonio "Tierra Negra" versus Indians of the communities of San Mateo Ixtatán and San Sebastián Coatán	A1, leg. 6118, exp. 56683 A1, leg. 5329, exp. 44907
1820	José and Joaquin Montejo versus Jacaltenango	A1, leg. 2806, exp. 27672

TABLE 11

LAND DISPUTES AMONG INDIAN TOWNS IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS

Year	Contestants	AGCA Source
1711-1712	San Antonio Huista, Santa Ana Huista, and Jacaltenango	A1.24, leg. 1579, exp. 10223
1730-1800's	Aguacatán versus Sacapulas	A1, leg. 5982, exp. 52582
		A1, leg. 5978, exp. 52518
		A1, leg. 5979, exp. 52536
		A1, leg. 6051, exp. 53470
1743	Jacaltenango versus Santa Ana Huista	A1, leg. 5985, exp. 52635
1814-1840's	Jacaltenango versus Todos Santos Cuchumatán	A1, leg. 6117, exp. 56588
		A1, leg. 6118, exp. 56680
		A1, leg. 2806, exp. 24664
		A1, leg. 6118, exp. 56709
		A1, leg. 6055, exp. 53546
		A1, leg. 6118, exp. 56696
		A1, leg. 2927, exp. 27474
		A1, leg. 2857, exp. 25791
1817	San Miguel Acatán versus San Marcos Jacaltenango	A1, leg. 2929, exp. 27463
1821	San Martín Cuchumatán, Todos Santos, and Jacaltenango	B3.6, leg. 47, exp. 983

Significantly, two of the earliest documented disputes involved highly-prized arable and grazing land on and adjacent to the Altos de Chiantla. The Spanish contestant in both cases was Juan Martínez de la Vega, an aggressive and wealthy *hacendado*. Indian communities fighting against the encroachment of the Spaniard included Chiantla, Todos Santos, and San Martín Cuchumatán.

In 1705, Martínez de la Vega requested that he be assigned what he claimed were vacant lands ("*tierras baldías*") in the area known as Mamenguiché about one league from the town of Chiantla. His principal reason for wanting the land was to extend the amount of pasture available to him for the raising of sheep. The Indians of Chiantla, however, claimed that Mamenguiché comprised "the best land the community holds, for it is here that we grow corn and graze sheep so that we can pay tribute required by His Majesty".[32]

In the long legal entanglement that followed, numerous individuals were called upon to submit information that would settle the dispute. Some Spaniards supported the request of Martínez de la Vega. Among them was Manuel Martín, who stated that the Indians "have land in other parts which is both fertile and plentiful".[33] Other Spaniards argued in support of the Indians, among them Joseph Brillegar and Pedro de Chavéz, the latter himself a local landholder and a rival of Martínez de la Vega. Arbitration by the *juez de tierras*, an official of the Crown responsible for the settlement of land disputes, eventually resulted in a new title to 178 *caballerías* being given to the Indians. Included in this allocation were four caballerías of land at Mamenguiché, suggesting that the conflict was finally settled in favour of the Indians.[34]

Over 30 years later, in 1737, Juan Martínez de la Vega, by then the owner of haciendas Chancol, El Rosario, and La Capellanía, was involved in another dispute. The Indian contestants on this occasion were the communities of Todos Santos and San Martín Cuchumatán. In a letter to the alcalde mayor of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango, Felipe Manrique de Guzmán, Martínez de la Vega stated that "the Indians--without cause, without title, and without any reason whatsoever--have begun to pasture their sheep on lands which are part of my haciendas".[35] The hacendado complained that the sheep, some 140 head, were overgrazing a certain pasture and thus causing damage to his property, "all of which has been composed and purchased from Your Majesty".[36] Two Indians in particular, Francisco Peréz and Gaspar Chap, were singled out as being the chief culprits.

For their part, the Indians of Todos Santos and San Martín Cuchumatán claimed that the stretch of land on which they grazed their sheep, known as Siquibilchas, was allocated to them as ejido, and stated in a letter to the juez de tierras that the land was in fact recorded as belonging to them in the community titles they currently held. The Indians also mentioned that they had "no other land which can be used to pasture sheep" and that Martínez de la Vega had "more than 100 caballerías on which to raise his sheep, which is more than sufficient".[37] Siquibilchas was needed, the Indians argued, "so that we can pay our tribute and clothe and feed our families".[38] Although they sent their community title as proof of ownership to the appropriate authorities, litigation this time went against the Indians. Under threat of a prison sentence and the confiscation of their sheep, the Indians withdrew their claim to Siquibilchas and abandoned the pasture completely.

The two cases outlined above can be considered more or less characteristic of the land disputes between Spaniards and Indians that occurred throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (see Table 10). Some conflicts were litigated in favour of Spaniards or Ladinos, others in favour of the Indians. Confrontation occasionally resulted in outbreaks of violence. In a land dispute at Huehuetenango in 1814, the Indian farmer Tomás Moreno was attacked by a knife-bearing Ladino who had driven his cattle on to the Indian's milpa.[39] The invasion of Indian lands by livestock owned by Spaniards and Ladinos was a common source of conflict.[40]

In addition to land disputes between Spaniards and Ladinos on the one hand, and Indian communities on the other, conflict also arose between and within native groups in the Cuchumatán highlands (see Table 11).

From 1730 until the early 1800s, the Indians of the Chalchitán parcialidad of Aguacatán clashed with the Indians of the Santo Tomás parcialidad of Sacapulas over the ownership of a section of land between the two towns known as Pichiquil. According to the testimony of Fray Raymundo de Herrera, the parish priest of Sacapulas, Pichiquil belonged to the Indians of Santo Tomás by virtue of the members of this parcialidad being the descendents of the Lamaquib group who were brought from a settlement called Solchum (Xolchun) to form part of the congregación of Sacapulas in the mid-sixteenth century. Pichiquil, the priest stated, had traditionally been worked by the Lamaquib of Xolchun. Their descendents, therefore, were the legitimate holders of the terrain. Since the Indians of Santo Tomás were now in need of more land, Herrera argued that they should be given legal title to their ancestral territory.[41]

The Indians of Chalchitán, however, claimed that Pichiquil was originally held by their forefathers, the Bai'joon, and therefore belonged to them. Furthermore, the Chalchitecos contended that the Indians of Sacapulas were economically much better off than they were, owning "ten haciendas with both livestock and a plentiful amount of land, in addition to working salt deposits and not having, like our community, to provide the frequent users of the camino real with food and lodging".[42]

A lengthy litigation ensued. Juan José Ordóñez, an official of the Crown, called for a complete remeasurement of the land boundaries between the towns of Aguacatán, Sacapulas, Cunén, and Nebaj. He was extremely sceptical of "proof" of ownership in the form of titles he considered old and useless, and stated that Pichiquil was the property neither of Aguacatán nor Sacapulas but was tierra realenga belonging only to the King. Tempers flared as the dispute dragged on. Santo Tomás twice accused Chalchitán of robbing livestock from land near Pichiquil belonging to the cofradiás of Sacapulas. By the end of the eighteenth century, arbitration by a royal surveyor gave legal ownership of the disputed land to Santo Tomás, principally because the Sacapulteco parcialidad had a greater number of tributaries, and hence more need of land, than their rivals in Aguacatán. The Indians of Chalchitán, for their part, refused to recognise the decision, and continued to occupy Pichiquil until their forceful eviction from the terrain in 1808 by the alcalde mayor of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango, Prudencio de Cosar.[43]

An equally heated dispute over land ownership took place in the early nineteenth century between the Indian communities of Jacaltenango and Todos Santos Cuchumatán. Conflict was again centred on land which formed a boundary between the two towns. Confrontation on this occasion apparently originated because the Indians of Todos Santos considered that they had bought land from their Jacalteca neighbours while the latter viewed the exchange not as a sale but merely as a temporary rental agreement.[44]

The land under contest was in an area called Gechec, traditionally Jacalteca ejido but claimed by Todos Santos through "purchase" from Jaçaltenango. In 1814, numerous families from Todos Santos who worked plots of land at Gechec reported that Indians from Jacaltenango, Petatán, and Concepción had invaded and burned their homes, had attacked and threatened innocent people, and had made off with 12 sacks of corn.[45] The Cuchumatecos swiftly retaliated. By 1817, after a series of attacks and counter-attacks, the situation had deteriorated to such a degree that the parish priest of Jacaltenango, José León Faboada, warned Crown officials of the possibility of "a murderous riot with grave consequences".[46] In an attempt to settle the feud, the alcalde mayor of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango, Manuel José de Lara, arranged a meeting with parish representatives and afterwards ordered a complete remeasurement of the land boundaries between the two communities. This move seems to have had little impact, however, for Jacaltenango and Todos Santos were still bickering over land jurisdiction in the mid-nineteenth century.[47]

Disputes over land ownership developed not only between neighbouring communities but also within communities between rival parcialidades. Nowhere was this internal conflict more marked than at Sacapulas. Throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the various social groups which comprised the congregación were in almost continual collision as each calpul or parcialidad sought to gain control over as much land in the vicinity of Sacapulas as possible (see Map 5). Thus the parcialidad of San Pedro waged a long legal battle against the parcialidades of Santiago and San Sebastián, principally over the right of the former faction to have access to the salinas (salt works) illegally dominated by the latter.[48] Similarly, the parcialidad of San Francisco was embroiled in a lengthy litigation with the parcialidad of Santo Tomás, chiefly over attempts by the latter faction to restrict the access of the former to fertile irrigable land in parts of the Río Negro valley.[49]

Land disputes were therefore a prevalent feature of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century life in several communities of the southern Cuchumatán region. Conflict most often occurred within the more densely settled zone of Spanish-Indian contact stretching from Aguacatán and Sacapulas in the east to Chiantla and Huehuetenango in the centre-south and beyond to Jacaltenango and Huista in the west. Land was as highly prized during the middle and late colonial period as it is today. The uses to which land in the Cuchumatanes was put will now be briefly sketched.

The Agricultural Economy

Through the introduction of new tools, new crops, and domesticated animals, the Spaniards radically and irrevocably altered patterns of land use in the Cuchumatán highlands. The European conquerors had little success, however, in creating an agricultural economy which was of much commercial significance, simply because most parts of the Cuchumatanes were environmentally unsuitable for colonial cash crops such as cacao and indigo. One of the few market-oriented activities made possible by the physical endowment of the region was the raising of livestock.

Several Indian towns are documented as supporting sizeable herds of livestock, particularly sheep. Fuentes y Guzmán, for instance, recorded "large and plentiful flocks of sheep, all with excellent meat" at Santiago Chimaltenango;[50] Joseph de Olvarrieta and Archbishop Cortés y Larraz noted the same at San Lorenzo, San Juan Ixcoy, San Pedro Soloma, San Miguel Acatán, San Sebastián Coatán, Santa Eulalia, and San Mateo Ixtatán.[51] Although most native communities kept some animals, whether sheep, goats, pigs, turkeys, chickens or even a few head of cattle, Indian stock raising in the Cuchumatán highlands was far surpassed by the pastoral pursuits of the Spanish haciendas of the region.

According to Fuentes y Guzmán, the Spanish residents of Huehuetenango at the end of the seventeenth century depended for their livelihood "on haciendas which raise all kinds of livestock, because the countryside here is ideally suited for this type of activity".[52] The largest ranches were on the Altos de Chiantla where, in addition to horses, mules, and cattle, tens of thousands of sheep were grazed. On the Moscoso holdings alone, over 20,000 sheep were raised "for the supply of wool and meat" chiefly to Huehuetenango, Quezaltenango, and Santiago de Guatemala.[53] Wool production fostered the development of weaving in the district, especially among the Indians of Chiantla, Huehuetenango, and Santa Isabel.[54] Meat production and preservation was facilitated by the proximity to two local salt sources, at Sacapulas and San Mateo Ixtatán.[55] Twice yearly, the livestock industry of the Cuchumatanes was given added vitality by the agricultural fairs held at Chiantla in conjunction with extravagant religious ceremonies related to the cult of the Virgin.[56] These fairs attracted buyers and sellers of quality livestock from all over Mexico and Central America and, together with regular transactions, must have represented a modest but noteworthy source of alcabala or sales-tax income for the Spanish Crown.[57]

Although locally and, to a lesser extent, regionally important, the Cuchumatán livestock industry must be properly viewed against the larger and more widespread backdrop of Indian subsistence and tribute-oriented agriculture. Native communities worked the land primarily to subsist and to pay Crown or encomendero tribute. During years of good harvests, there might be a surplus left after subsistence needs had been met and tribute paid; this could either be stored or traded. In times of crisis, brought on by drought, earthquake, an outbreak of disease, or an invasion of locusts, there was barely enough food to survive even before tribute was due.[58]

The Indians grew a variety of crops. Some were age-old staples, such as maize, beans, chile peppers, and squash; others, like wheat, sugar cane, onions, garlic, bananas, apples, and peaches, were introduced by the Spaniards. Indian towns tended to specialise, then as now, in producing whatever was best suited to the local setting. Thus sugar cane was cultivated at San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán, San Pedro Necta, and San Andrés Cuilco.[59]

Salt was produced by Sacapulas and San Mateo Ixtatán, and was taken by itinerant merchants as far away as Chiapas, Quezaltenango, and Suchitepéquez, where it was traded for cacao and cotton.[60] Todos Santos grew apples and made from them each year "more than 2000 jugs of cider which sell for 24 reales a jug".[61] Wheat, the cultivation of which was taught to the Indians by missionaries in the sixteenth century,[62] was grown as a cash crop at Santa María Cunén, San Sebastián Coatán, and Concepción; it was used to feed the Spanish residents of Ciudad Real de Chiapas, Comitán, Chiantla, and Huehuetenango.[63] A small amount of cacao and achiote, a vegetable dye used to colour food, was produced at Huista, San Andrés Cuilco, and San Andrés Jacaltenango.[64] And bananas and pineapples were grown at Purificación Jacaltenango.[65]

The land was therefore put to good use, by both Spaniard and Indian alike. Spanish interest in land in the Cuchumatanes was almost negligible in the sixteenth century, with the possible exception of the Huehuetenango area. This interest became increasingly important during the seventeenth century depression, and continued quite impressively throughout the eighteenth century up until independence in 1821. Land acquisition by Spaniards had little impact on native communities until the end of the seventeenth century when the Indian population began its demographic recovery after a century and a half of decline. A growing native population clashing with Spanish desires for land resulted, between 1700 and 1821, in a spate of conflict over land rights and ownership. Disputes developed between Spaniards and Indians, and also between and within native communities. The hacienda or great estate certainly emerged in parts of the Cuchumatán highlands, but while Spanish encroachment was by no means insignificant, the Indians managed to retain possession of many of their ancestral lands. Explanation of such a pattern lies intertwined in the physical remoteness of the region, its limited economic potential, the nature of Spanish colonialism in Central America, and the tenacity and willingness of the Indians to exercise their rights as subjects of the Crown by entering into the often lengthy and complex litigation process. Colonial landholding in the Cuchumatanes therefore bears little resemblance to either the Chevalier "North Mexican" model or the Taylor "Oaxaca" example. The Cuchumatán pattern, rather, straddles a convenient middle ground between both extremes.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

[1] An excellent review of hacienda literature is contained in Magnus Mörner's critical historiographical essay "The Spanish American Hacienda: A Survey of Recent Research and Debate", Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 53, No. 2, May 1973, pp. 183-216.

[2] W. Borah, New Spain's Century of Depression, Ibero-Americana No. 35, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951) and F. Chevalier, La Formation des grands domaines au Mexique: Terre et société aux XVI-XVII siècles, (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1952). The latter has been translated by Alvin Eustis and edited by Lesley B. Simpson as Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: The Great Hacienda, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970).

[3] Borah, op. cit., p. 44.

[4] M.J. MacLeod, Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History, 1520-1720, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).

[5] MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 230 and 308.

[6] MacLeod, op. cit., p. 309.

[7] W.B. Taylor, Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972).

[8] Taylor, op. cit., p. 201.

[9] W.B. Taylor, "Landed Society in New Spain: A View from the South", Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 54, No. 3, August 1974, p. 389.

[10] Taylor, "A View from the South", op. cit., pp. 387-413.

[11] MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 374-389.

[12] A. Recinos, Monografía del Departamento de Huehuetenango, (Guatemala: Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1954), pp. 54-55.

[13] W.L. Sherman, Forced Native Labour in Sixteenth Century Central America, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), pp. 71 and 92; and F.A. de Fuentes y Guzmán, Recordación Florida, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Tomo CCLIX, 1972), pp. 47-48.

[14] Fuentes y Guzman, op. cit., pp. 44-51 and Recinos, op. cit., pp. 53-79, contain valuable summaries of the modest mining operations carried out by both Spaniards and Indians during the colonial period. There is also fairly substantial archival documentation on the subject in the Archivo General de Centroamérica. Silver from the mines of Chiantla was used to decorate churches throughout Guatemala. The famous image of the Virgin in the parish church, known as Nuestra Señora de Chiantla, was itself made from the silver of nearby mines. A large mural in the parish church, portraying a robust Spaniard supervising the labour of a number of Indians who are pushing wheelbarrows, hauling loads, and hacking away in a shaft penetrating a hillside, garishly records the mining tradition of the community.

[15] AGCA, A3, leg. 2863, exp. 41696.

[16] MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 222-224 and 310-329.

[17] AGCA, A1.20, leg. 1495, exp. 9974; and Recinos, op. cit., p. 197.

[18] Recinos, op. cit., p. 197.

[19] Recinos, op. cit., p. 198.

[20] AGCA, A1.43, leg. 2895, exp. 26738; and Recinos, op. cit., pp. 199-200.

[21] Recinos, op. cit., pp. 200-201. Debt peonage was the customary means of securing labour for the haciendas of the Altos de Chiantla. Cf. AGCA, A3, leg. 2775, exp. 40090 and A1.24, leg. 6096, exp. 55491.

[22] AGCA, A1, leg. 6001, exp. 52831 and Recinos, op. cit., pp. 201-202. The holdings of Barrutia were sold in 1830 to Joaquín Mont y Prats for 15,000 pesos. The estate was finally dismantled by the Guatemalan government at the end of the nineteenth century.

[23] L.B. Simpson, Studies in the Administration of the Indians in New Spain, Ibero-Americana No. 7, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934), p. 44; and T.T. Veblen, The Ecological, Cultural, and Historical Bases of Forest Preservation in Totonicapán, Guatemala, (Berkeley: University of California, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1975), p. 339. M.A. Tovilla, Relación Histórica Descriptiva de las Provincias de la Verapaz y de la del Manché, (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1960), p. 218, contains an important statement regarding the dichotomy of Indian landholding at Sacapulas which may be found in the discussion of congregación in Chapter Five.

[24] F. de Solano, Tierra y Sociedad en el Reino de Guatemala, (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1977), pp. 114-153.

[25] AGCA, Al, leg. 6042, exp. 53327.

[26] AGCA, Al.11, leg. 6106, exp. 55864, 55865, 55802 and 55800.

[27] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

[28] AGCA, Al.17.7, leg. 210, exp. 5008, and Al.44, leg. 6115, exp. 56343. Fuentes y Guzmán, in his map of the principal features of the Corregimiento of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango, actually depicts the "Ranchos de Santa Eulalia" in Lacandón country four leagues to the north and west of the highland townsite of Santa Eulalia (see Plate 1). P. Cortés y Larraz, Descripción Geográfico-Moral de la Diocesis de Goathemala, (Guatemala: Sociedad de Geografía`e Historia, 1958), Vol. II, p. 126, also mentions this migration into the Lacandón lowlands on the part of the Indians of Santa Eulalia.

[29] The ecological asset, however, was offset by the disadvantage of being physically more susceptible to attack by invading Lacandones. Raids into the northern Cuchumatanes by hostile Lacandón Indians were a common occurrence throughout the colonial period; see Chapter Five.

[30] AGCA, Al, leg. 5983, exp. 52607; and Al, leg. 6051, exp. 53484.

[31] AGCA, Al.45.6, leg. 386, exp. 8058.

[32] AGCA, Al, leg. 5960, exp. 52251.

[33] AGCA, Al, leg. 5960, exp. 52251.

[34] AGCA, A1, leg. 5960, exp. 52251.

[35] AGCA, A1, leg. 5976, exp. 52505.

[36] AGCA, A1, leg. 5976, exp. 52505; and A1, leg. 3025, exp. 29183.

[37] AGCA, A1, leg. 5976, exp. 52505.

[38] AGCA, A1, leg. 5976, exp. 52505.

[39] AGCA, A1.57, leg. 6117, exp. 56583.

[40] AGCA, A1.45.8, leg. 5329, exp. 44907; A1.45.9, leg. 2928, exp. 27452; and A1.45.8, leg. 2806, exp. 24672.

[41] AGCA, A1, leg. 5979, exp. 52536. According to the _Popol Vuh_, the Lamaq or Lamaquib were one of the groups which came from the East with the Quiché forefathers. Cf. A. Recinos, _Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya_, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), pp. 170-173; and R.M. Carmack, _Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Sources_, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 207 and 368-369.

[42] AGCA, A1, leg. 5978, exp. 52518.

[43] AGCA, A1, leg. 5979, exp. 52536; A1, leg. 5978, exp. 52518; and A1, leg. 6051, exp. 53470. The Indians of Aguacatán never abandoned their claim to Pichiquil. Their perseverance finally paid off, because sometime after 1808 the decision to award Pichiquil to Sacapulas was reversed. Today, Pichiquil is an _aldea_ of the _municipio_ of Aguacatán. Cf. M.M. Urrutia, _La División Politica y Administrativa de la República de Guatemala_, (Guatemala: Editorial Iberia, 1961), Tomo I, p. 663.

[44] AGCA, A1.45, leg. 6117, exp. 56588.

[45] AGCA, A1, leg. 6055, exp. 53546; and A1.45, leg. 6118, exp. 56709.

[46] AGCA, A1.45.1, leg. 2806, exp. 24664.

[47] AGCA, B.100.1, leg. 1419, exp. 33408.

[48] AGCA, A1, leg. 6025, exp. 53126; and A1, leg. 6037, exp. 53257.

[49] AGCA, A1, leg. 6021, exp. 53084; A1, leg. 6040, exp. 53305; and A1, leg. 6042, exp. 53327. An excellent summary of the internal land conflicts at Sacapulas in the late eighteenth century may be found in Carmack, op. cit., pp. 206-209.

[50] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., p. 24.

[51] AGCA, A1.17.7, leg. 210, exp. 5008; and Cortés y Larraz, op. cit., p. 123.

[52] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., p. 23.

[53] AGCA, A1.24, leg. 6096, exp. 55491.

[54] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 23, 24 and 32.

[55] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

[56] Recinos, op. cit., p. 204. The agricultural fairs at Chiantla were held on February 2nd and September 8th each year, in conjunction with the Purification of the Virgin and the Nativity of the Virgin respectively.

[57] AGCA, A1.24, leg. 6096, exp. 55491, records the Moscoso holdings alone as paying "cresidas cantidades de alcabalas", "large amounts of sales taxes", in addition to supporting a guild of hatmakers in Santiago de Guatemala.

[58] This was particularly the case during and after an outbreak of disease. See, for example, AGCA, A3.16, leg. 2899, exp. 43049; A3.16, leg. 249, exp. 5036; and A1, leg. 6940, exp. 57766. All three expedientes discuss the inability of the Indian population of the parish of Soloma to feed themselves, let alone pay tribute, after suffering from outbreaks of typhus and measles during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

[59] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 28, 31 and 35.

[60] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., p. 46; and AGCA, A1.17.7, leg. 210, exp. 5008.

[61] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

[62] Tovilla, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[63] Cortés y Larraz, *op. cit.*, p. 123; and AGCA, A1.44, leg. 6115, exp. 56343.

[64] Fuentes y Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 35; and AGCA, A1.44, leg. 6115, exp. 56343.

[65] AGCA, A1.44, leg. 6115, exp. 56343.

CHAPTER EIGHT

COLLAPSE AND RECOVERY: A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS

> When the isolation of the New World was broken, when Columbus brought the two halves of this planet together, the American Indian met for the first time his most hideous enemy: not the white man nor his black servant, but the invisible killers which those men brought in their blood and breath.
>
> (Alfred W. Crosby, 1972)

Introduction

In many colonial societies there exists a close relationship between population size and economic well-being. Spanish Central America illustrates this relationship clearly. The economic prospects of the colony were intimately linked to its historical demography. Thus with a large population from which to draw labour, the initial economic outlook seemed promising. As population declined during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a severe economic depression set in. When population began to increase towards the end of the seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century, the economy revived.[1]

The operation of this crude, causal connection between population size and economic well-being permeates a number of developments in Spanish Central America. Indian depopulation was a major factor behind the demise of the encomienda system. It also contributed towards the formation of the great estate and the emergence of debt peonage.[2] Such important developments can therefore be fully understood only when viewed in relation to population trends and fluctuations. It is to the establishment of a demographic profile for the Cuchumatán highlands during the period of Spanish colonial rule that this chapter is devoted.

Demographic Profile of the Cuchumatán Highlands (1520-1821)

Any attempt to reconstruct the population history of the Cuchumatán highlands is beset by a lack of consistent, representative data. The paucity of source materials containing demographic information is particularly severe for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by comparison, are reasonably well-documented. Perhaps the safest procedure is to regard early estimates of population size as necessarily tentative and to scrutinise with caution later calculations before reaching any final conclusions.

The earliest surviving record known to contain population data for every town in the Cuchumatán highlands is a list of tributarios (Indian tribute payers) for the years 1664 to 1678.[3] Prior to this late seventeenth-century tribute count few reliable figures exist. The data upon which estimates of the magnitude of the sixteenth-century population can be made are appallingly scarce. Among these data are reports of the size of Indian armies encountered during the battles of conquest, as recorded by the chronicler Fuentes y Guzmán;[4] the number of tributarios in certain Cuchumatán towns assessed by the President of the audiencia of Guatemala, Alonso López de Cerrato, between 1548 and 1551;[5] and the number of tributarios in the town of Huehuetenango, assessed by President García de Valverde between 1578 and 1582.[6]

An estimate based on the size of the Indian armies which confronted Spanish forces between 1525 and 1530 suggests that the contact population of the Cuchumatán highlands was perhaps around 150,000. This figure indicates that the late pre-Conquest population of the region may have numbered as much as 260,000, roughly the same size as the Cuchumatán population in the mid-twentieth century.[7]

Of the two sixteenth century tribute counts which contain information relating to Cuchumatán towns, the one made by Valverde is more reliable than the earlier count made by Cerrato because the latter relied partly on reports submitted by local Indian leaders (caciques) rather than on personal town inspections conducted by officials of the Crown. In order to reduce the amount of tribute demanded by the Spaniards, and thus perhaps secure more for themselves, it is possible that caciques under-reported the number of eligible tributarios each town supported.[8] The

Valverde count, undertaken personally by the President and designated officials, is particularly useful because it contains two figures; the first is apparently a revised version of the Cerrato assessment dating back to the mid-sixteenth century while the second is the new Valverde Assessment of 1578-1582.[9]

The town of Huehuetenango, formerly assessed at 570 tributarios, was adjusted downwards by Valverde to 367 tributarios.[10] A tributario at this time was a married male Indian between the ages of 18 and 50; roughly one out of every five persons would have fallen into this category.[11] The Valverde statistics therefore suggest a total population for Huehuetenango in the middle years of the sixteenth century of around 2800, a figure which by 1580 had fallen to around 1800. In the tribute list for 1664-1678, the earliest known document with comprehensive tribute data for all 40 towns in the Cuchumatán highlands, Huehuetenango accounts for 3.9 per cent of the total number of tributarios.[12] Assuming that Huehuetenango represented this same proportion in the sixteenth century, then the total number of Cuchumatán tributarios in 1550 was around 14,600 and in 1580 was around 9400. Using a population to tributario ratio of five to one, these figures indicate that the population of the Cuchumatán highlands in 1550 may have numbered about 73,000 and in 1580 may have numbered about 47,000.

These estimates alone are highly tentative, but it is possible to provide some independent frame of reference by which they can assume greater credibility. According to both MacLeod and Veblen, the mid-sixteenth century population of highland Guatemala probably numbered approximately one-half the size of the contact population owing to the devastating impact of the gucumatz plague of 1545-1548. Similarly, the number of Indians alive in the year 1580 was about one-half that of the mid-sixteenth century because of the equally devastating impact of the matlazáhuatl pandemic of 1576-1581.[13] Acceptance of this thesis means that a contact population of 150,000, the estimate for the Cuchumatanes obtained from the size of Indian armies confronting the Spaniards during the battles of conquest, would by 1550 have fallen to about 75,000. This figure compares exceptionally well with the estimate of 73,000 derived from the Valverde count. A mid-sixteenth century population of 73,000 would by 1580 have numbered around 37,000. This figure compares reasonably well with the estimate of 47,000 also derived from the Valverde assessment.

For close to 100 years after the Valverde count there is almost no known documentation which contains demographic information relating to Cuchumatán communities.[14] The one exception is an ecclesiastical census for the year 1604 which lists the number of towns and vecinos (householders) under the charge of the Dominican monastery at Sacapulas. Unfortunately, this census includes only those settlements under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Dominican and Franciscan orders. Since the majority of Indian towns in the Cuchumatanes were under the religious administration of the Mercedarian order, and consequently were not recorded, the utility of this otherwise important source is minimal.[15]

The tribute count of 1664-1678 is the next document after the Valverde assessment of 1578-1582 which contains detailed demographic data on the Cuchumatán highlands. This extremely valuable document gives a complete breakdown, by town and occasionally by parcialidad, of the entire tribute paying population of the region. The total number of tributarios at this time was 4040-1/2.[16] Fuentes y Guzmán, during the second half of the seventeenth century, reckoned on a population to tributario ratio of four to one.[17] Using this same ratio, 4040-1/2 tribute payers would be indicative of a total Cuchumatán population of 16,162 between the years 1664 and 1678.

For the remainder of the colonial period there is no shortage of reliable and comprehensive sources, chiefly in the form of unpublished documents in the Archivo General de Centroamérica, upon which to reconstruct the population history of the Cuchumatán highlands. The abundant eighteenth and early nineteenth century documents from which demographic data can be gleaned include tribute lists, reports of officials of the Crown, ecclesiastical records, and meticulous censuses which enumerate the Cuchumatán population in great detail by age, sex, class, and race. This information is synthesised in Table 12 and is represented graphically in Diagram 2.

The overwhelming feature of the historical demography of the Cuchumatán highlands is the catastrophic decline in

TABLE 12

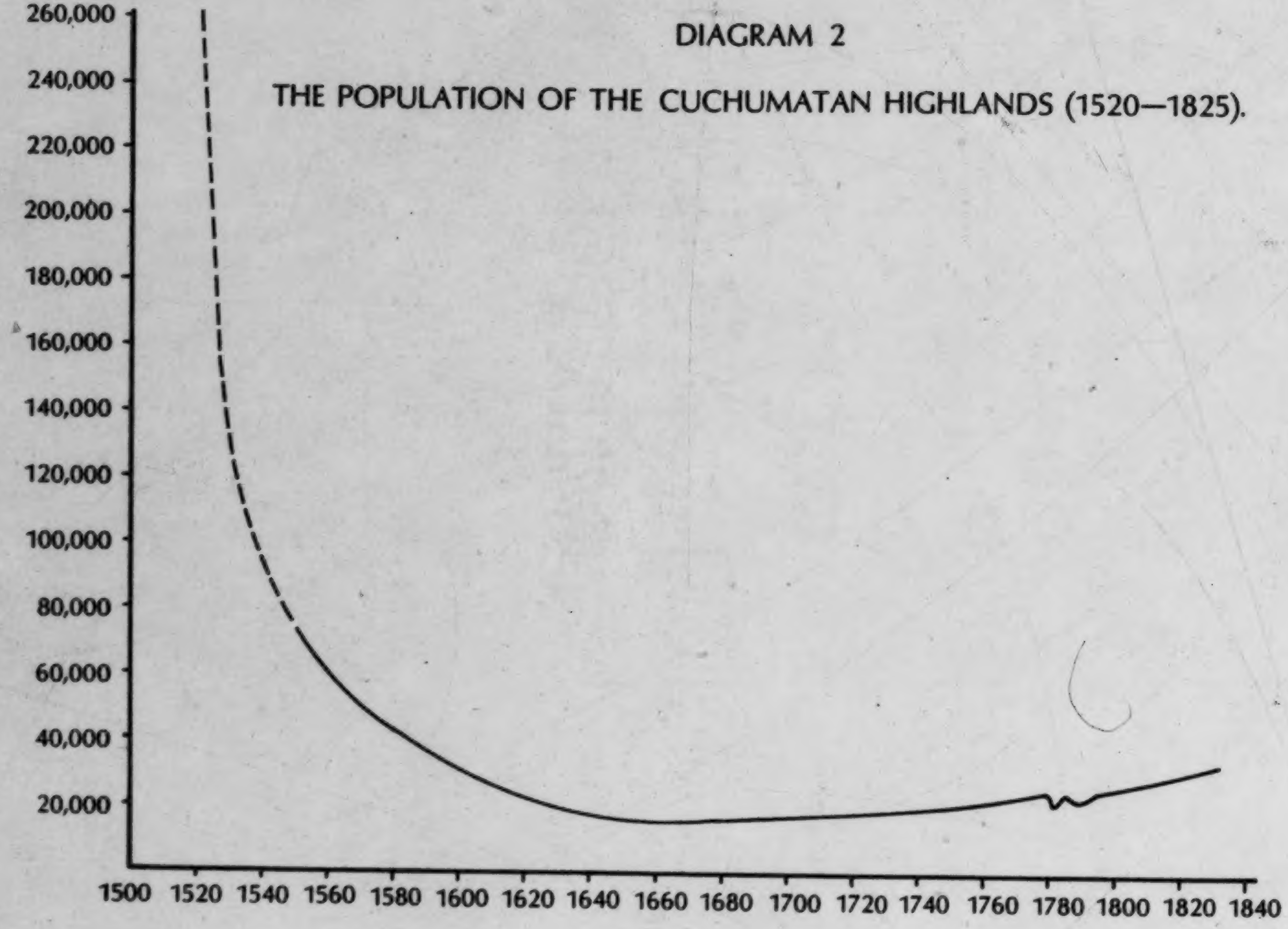
THE POPULATION OF THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS (1520-1825)

Year	Population	Source
1520	260,000	Extrapolation of size of Indian armies recorded by Fuentes y Guzmán
1525-1530	150,000	Estimate based on size of Indian armies recorded by Fuentes y Guzmán
1550	73,000	AGI:AG966. P/T* ratio of 5:1. Huehuetenango as 3.9% of Cuchumatán *tributarios*
1580	47,000	AGI:AG966. P/T ratio of 5:1. Huehuetenango as 3.9% of Cuchumatán *tributarios*
1664-1678	16,162	AGCA:A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391. P/T ratio of 4:1.
1690	19,824	Fuentes y Guzman, *Recordación Florida*. P/T ratio 4:1.
1760	21,176	AGCA:A3.16, leg. 950, exp. 17715. P/T ratio of 4:1.
1768-1770	23,418	Cortes y Larraz, *Descripción Geográfico-Moral de la Diocesis de Goathemala*.
1778	27,505	AGCA:A1.44, leg. 6097, exp. 55507.
1779	28,047	AGCA:A1.44, leg. 6097, exp. 55507.
1782	23,021	AGCA:A1.44, leg. 6097, exp. 55507.
1783	25,027	AGCA:A1.44, leg. 6097, exp. 55507.
1784	24,828	AGCA:A1.44, leg. 6097, exp. 55507.
1788	24,678	AGCA:A3.16, leg. 246, exp. 4912. P/T ratio of 4.82:1.
1790	23,623	AGCA:A3.16, leg. 237, exp. 4706. P/T ratio of 4.82:1.
1797-1798	24,129	Hidalgo, *Gaceta de Guatemala*
1801	27,477	AGCA:A3.16, leg. 243, exp. 4853. P/T ratio of 4.82:1.
1811	29,571	AGCA:A3.16, leg. 953, exp. 17773. P/T ratio of 4.82:1.
1825	34,691	AGCA:B.84.3, leg. 1135, exp. 26030-26034.

*P/T = Population to *Tributario* Ratio.

DIAGRAM 2

THE POPULATION OF THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS (1520—1825).



population following the Spanish conquest. Massive demographic collapse probably began in the years immediately preceding the battles of conquest and continued throughout the sixteenth and for most of the seventeenth century. Reaching its nadir about 1670, population began to recover and grow throughout the eighteenth century, although there were still occasional fluctuations. By the end of the colonial period population was on a steady, if slight, upward trend. The explanations of this overall pattern of decline, recovery, and growth will now be discussed.

Causes of Demographic Collapse and Readjustment

Amidst an almost perennial controversy, recent research by a number of scholars has convincingly demonstrated that several parts of the New World were densely populated on the eve of their "discovery" by the Old World and that native American populations declined drastically in size following contact with the European invaders.[18] The traditional interpretation of the catastrophic decline of the indigenous population in Spanish America, between 80 and 90 per cent in some regions, is the *Leyenda Negra*, or Black Legend, which attributes the post-contact decrease in Indian numbers to the unmitigated slaughter, ruthless enslavement, and harsh exploitation of the native population by Spanish conquerors and colonists.[19] It is not difficult to find references in the literature which support the thesis of the Black Legend. According to Bartolomé de las Casas, for example, five million Indian lives were lost in Guatemala alone because of the excesses of the conquistador Pedro de Alvarado and his henchmen. In las Casas' own words:

> And this I dare affirm, that the enormities committed by ... him especially that was sent to Guatemala ... are enough to fill a particular volume, so many were the slaughters, violences, injuries, butcheries, and beastly desolations [commited by] that abominable tyrant [Pedro de Alvarado]; how many tears, how many sighs did he provoke, upon how many did he bring desolation in his worldly pilgrimage and endanger their damnation in the world to come?[20]

It is now quite certain, however, that the principal cause of aboriginal depopulation was not massacre and mistreatment at the hands of the conquering Spaniards but the introduction by the invaders of Old World diseases to which the Indians of the New World had no natural, physiological immunity.[21]

Since the submergence of the Bering land bridge about 10,000 years ago until the coming of the Europeans in the late fifteenth century, the inhabitants of the New World lived in virtual isolation from those of the Old World. This long period of isolation weakened considerably the resistance of American Indians to most of the major diseases of mankind. Possibly because of the harsh climate characteristic of Siberia, the land bridge, and Alaska, many diseases were never carried over from the Old World to the New World by the first migrants; the Arctic cold simply killed off both the disease organisms and those humans suffering from chronic sickness or contamination. Alternative explanations may be that the migrations across the Bering Strait occurred so long ago that many diseases had not yet evolved in the Old World before the departure of the Amerindian ancestors; or the original group of migrants was so small that the loss of immunity factors was due to genetic drift.[22] Whatever the reason, the inhabitants of the New World developed tolerances only for a limited number of indigenous American diseases. During pre-Columbian times, the Indians of America appear to have been subjected primarily to gastro-intestinal disturbances and respiratory disorders.[23] Prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, therefore, the Indians enjoyed an existence relatively free of infectious diseases. Maladies such as smallpox, measles, mumps, typhus, influenza, and diptheria --all of which were endemic to the Old World--were completely unknown. When these diseases were inadvertently brought to America by Spanish conquerors and colonists, their devastating effect on hitherto isolated human communities may well have caused, in the words of one scholar, "the greatest destruction of lives in history".[24]

The first Old World disease to arrive in America was smallpox.[25] The impact of smallpox on the native population of the New World was at least as cataclysmic as the impact of the Black Death of 1346 to 1350 on European society; that is, one-third to one-half of the Indians who came in contact with the disease must have perished.[26] The Franciscan chronicler, Toribio de Motolinía, has left behind a vivid description of the ravage of smallpox on the Indians of Mexico:

> The first plague was an epidemic of smallpox. It broke out in this manner. Hernando Cortés was Captain and Governor at the time when Captain Pánfilo de Narváez landed here [early in 1520]. On one of his ships came a Negro stricken with smallpox, a disease that was unknown in this land. New Spain was very thickly populated at this time. When the smallpox began to infect the Indians, there was so much sickness and pestilence among them in all the land that in most provinces more than half of the people died, whereas in others the number was somewhat smaller. Besides, they were accustomed, the healthy and the sick, to bathe frequently; and, because they did not cease doing this, they died like flies. Many succumbed also to hunger because, all taking sick at the same time, they were unable to assist one another. There was no one to give them bread or anything else. In many places it happened that all of the same household died. Since it was impossible to bury all the dead in order to remove the offensive odor that came from the corpses, their houses were thrown over them, and thus their home became their sepulcher.[27]

Soon after sweeping through Central Mexico, smallpox spread southwards to the highlands of Guatemala, accompanied perhaps by pulmonary plague or typhus.[28] By the end of 1520, four years before the entrada of Pedro de Alvarado, the Indians of highland Guatemala were reeling from their initial encounter with what MacLeod has appropriately called "the shock troops of the conquest".[29] The chroniclers of the Cakchiquel lament that it "was in truth terrible, the number of dead among the people ... in that period ... when the plague raged".[30] This first bout of pestilence was followed about 12 years later by a pandemic of measles. Thereafter, major outbreaks of Old World diseases were a common feature of Indian life in colonial Guatemala and consistently resulted in high mortality among the immunologically defenseless native population (see Table 13).

It is unlikely that the Indian peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands escaped these deadly visitations. The testimony of Thomas Gage, in connection with an outbreak of typhus in 1631, indicates that the impact of disease tended to be widespread:

> The year following [1631], all that country [highland Guatemala] was generally infected with a kind of contagious sickness, almost as infectious as the plague, which they call tabardillo (typhus). This fever in the very inward parts and bowels scarce continued to the seventh day but commonly took its victims away from the world to a grave the third or fifth day. The filthy smell and stench which came from those who lay sick of this disease was enough to infect the rest of the house, and all that came to see them. It rotted their very mouths and tongues, and made them as black as coal before they died. Very few Spaniards were infected with this contagion, but the Indians generally were taken with it.[31]

In addition to being affected by diseases of pandemic proportion, such as the one described above and those listed in Table 13, the Indian peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands were also exposed throughout the colonial period to more localised outbreaks of disease. These are listed in Table 14.

The recurrent outbreak of diseases to which the native population was immunologically defenseless is the

TABLE 13

MAJOR OUTBREAKS OF DISEASE IN HIGHLAND GUATEMALA (1519-1750) WHICH WOULD HAVE AFFECTED THE NATIVE POPULATION OF THE CUCHUMATANES

Year	Disease	Impact
1519-1520	Smallpox and perhaps also pulmonary plague or typhus.	Very high mortality. At least one-third of the Indian population would have perished.
1532-1534	Sarampión (Measles)	High mortality among Indians.
1545-1548	Peste (pneumonic plague) Gucumatz (a type of plague).	Very high mortality among the Indians. Several villages entirely wiped out.
1576-1581	Peste, viruela (smallpox), matlazáhuatl (typhus?), and gucumatz.	High mortality among Indians. Several villages again entirely wiped out.
1607-1608	Tabardillo (typhus and/or a type of plague).	Disease only affected Indians. Spaniards untouched.
1631	Tabardillo	Many deaths among Indians.
1650	Gucumatz, bubonic plague.	Great death. Villages disappeared.
1666	Peste, tabardillo.	Many deaths among Indians.
1686	Typhus and/or pneumonic plague.	High mortality.
1693-1695	Sarampión, viruela, and typhus.	High mortality.
1704-1705	Peste	-
1708-1709	Peste	Only Indians affected.
1710-1711	Peste	Villages wiped out.
1733	Peste, smallpox, typhoid.	Many deaths
1741	Tabardillo	-
1746	Tabardillo	-

Source: M.J. MacLeod, *Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973, pp. 98-100).

TABLE 14

LOCAL OUTBREAKS OF DISEASE IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS (1548-1819)

Year	Disease	Towns Affected	Source*	Comments
c1548-c1615	"Pestes" (unspecified)	Towns of the "sierras de Cuchumatlán".	Remesal, Vol. II, p. 259.	"Ahora con las pestes han venido [los pueblos] en diminución".
1666-1670	Tabardillo (typhus?)	Huehuetenango	A3.16, leg. 1600, exp. 26390.	Indian tribute lowered after epidemic carried off 45 adults.
1733-1773	Viruela (smallpox)	Sacapulas and Cunén	A3.16, leg. 2819, exp. 40918.	Many tribute-payers perished. Indians unable to pay tribute and ask for exemption.
1774	"Peste" (unspecified)	Various towns	A3.16, leg. 943, exp. 17608.	*Alcalde mayor* informs treasury that certain towns will not be able to pay tribute.
1780-1781	Viruela (smallpox)	All forty towns of the Partido of Huehuetenango	A1.44, leg. 6097, exp. 55507.	Over 4000 deaths. *Alcalde mayor* authorised to use community funds to help fight the disease.
1786	Tabardillo	Concepción and Petatán	A1.4, leg. 6101, exp. 55666.	-
1795-1799	Tabardillo and viruela; tabardillo was particularly widespread.	Numerous towns, including Nebaj, Chajul, Todos Santos and San Martín Cuchumatán, Jacaltenango, Concepción,	A1.24, leg. 6101, exp. 55666, 55667, 55668, and 55669; A1.47, leg. 385, exp. 8012; A3.16, leg. 255, exp. 5719; A3.16, leg. 244, exp. 4869; A1.49, leg. 192, exp. 3911; A3.1, leg. 2894, exp. 42846.	Over 500 deaths in Jacaltenango alone and an equal number in Concepción; visit to stricken towns by the *alcalde mayor* and a doctor, the former to adjust tribute payment, the latter to fight the spread of disease.
1802-1807	Tabardillo, viruela, and sarampión (measles)	Numerous towns, including San Juan Ixcoy, Santa Eulalia, Nebaj, San Pedro Soloma, San Mateo Ixtatán.	A1.1, leg. 6105, exp. 55795; A1.24, leg. 6091, exp. 55306; A3.16, leg. 245, exp. 4909; A1.4, leg. 6107, exp. 55836; A1.4, leg. 6091, exp. 55307; A1.47, leg. 2162, exp. 15558; A3.16, leg. 2899, exp. 43063.	*Alcalde mayor* requests that tribute should not be collected from certain towns. Locust invasion exacerbates situation. Food shortages and much human suffering.
1809-1812	Tabardillo, viruela, and fiebre putrida (type of fever)	San Miguel Acatán, San Mateo Ixtatán, San Juan Cotzal.	A1.1, leg. 6093, exp. 55337; A1.49, leg. 386, exp. 8055; A1.4, leg. 6113, exp. 56214; A1, leg. 394, exp. 8238.	Indians in stricken communities given a reprieve in the payment of tribute.
1814-1819	Tabardillo	Chiantla and Jacaltenango.	A1.49, leg. 387, exp. 8072; A1.49, leg. 388, exp. 8099.	Measures taken to halt spread of disease.

*All archival citations refer to unpublished documents housed in the Archivo General de Centroamérica, Guatemala City.

chief factor behind the demographic collapse of the Indian peoples of the Cuchumatanes following the Spanish conquest. From 1520 until the end of Spanish colonial rule in 1821, the Indians were subjected to unrelenting waves of pestilence. Mortality was high. Between 1520 and 1670, population declined by more than 90 per cent, falling from perhaps 260,000 to a little over 16,000. By the end of the seventeenth century, the collapse had abated and there were signs of a slight but significant demographic recovery. Several fluctuations towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, suggest that the Indians had still not built up effective immunities to diseases such as smallpox and typhus. Only at the very end of the colonial period are there positive indications of a general increase in Indian numbers (see Table 12 and Diagram 2).

The impact of disease on Indian life in the Cuchumatán highlands was profound. Guatemalan archives contain thousands of documents which describe, in lugubrious detail, the disruptions wrought by outbreaks of disease on scores of Indian communities. These dislocations included: substantial loss of life; the inability of certain towns to meet the annual or semi-annual tribute requirement demanded by the Crown; the abandonment of disease-ridden congregaciones for the safety of uninfected or less infected rural areas; and the failure on the part of Indians to work their land, resulting in widespread hardship and deprivation. Rather than attempt to exhaust the extensive archival documentation relating to the incidence and impact of disease on native society, attention will be focussed on two particularly disruptive epidemics: an outbreak of *viruela*, or smallpox, in 1780-1781 and an outbreak of *tabardillo*, or typhus, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Smallpox and Typhus in the Cuchumatán Highlands (1780-1810)

After reaching its nadir of 16,000 around 1670, the population of the Cuchumatanes increased slowly in number for roughly 100 years. By 1779, population had risen about 75 per cent above its 1670 level, numbering slightly over 28,000. The vast majority of this population were Indians. Ladinos and Spaniards accounted for only five per cent of the total Cuchumatán population at the end of the colonial period, and represented an even smaller percentage during earlier times.[32] The population recovery which took place between 1670 and 1779, therefore, reflected essentially an increase in Indian numbers. With the outbreak in 1780 of a virulent epidemic of smallpox, the upward trend of the Indian population was abruptly arrested.

During a period of about one year, smallpox, a disease caused by a deadly virus entering the respiratory system, swept through all 40 towns of the Cuchumatanes. In response to a request by the *alcalde mayor* of Huehuetenango, Francisco Geraldino, resident priests supplied information concerning the number of deaths that had occurred within their parish boundaries. Geraldino, acting on a royal edict, then gathered the accounts of the parish priests together, apparently with a view to determining which towns were most in need of assistance. The data collected by Geraldino, giving detailed town by town breakdown of the impact of the epidemic, is shown in Table 15.

Over 4000 Indians of all ages perished, with more than 50 per cent of the total number of deaths occurring among children. Of those who died, 259 were tributarios. Some towns, such as Sacapulas and Santa Eulalia, were hit hard, while in others, for example Petatán and San Gaspar Ixchil, mortality was less. Within a year, this outbreak of smallpox had reduced the total population of the Cuchumatanes, after a century of slow demographic recovery, from 28,000 to around 24,000, a drop of almost 15 per cent.

Following a brief inspection of several of the stricken towns, officials of the Crown made various recommendations about what could be done to alleviate suffering and to halt the spread of disease. Most of the "recommendations" amounted to little more than alloting to certain towns a sum of money, taken from their Bienes de Comunidad (community funds), which was then spent on bedding, clothing, and food. Parish priests were given responsibility over the distribution of goods and provisions among those Indian families considered most in need. In Aguacatán and Chalchitán, ten pesos bought an arroba (c.25 lbs.) of sugar and 28 petates; in Todos Santos, 20 pesos purchased two arrobas of sugar, ten petates, and a quantity of cloth used for making blankets.[33] Financial assistance is recorded only

TABLE 15

MORTALITY IN CUCHUMATAN TOWNS DURING THE SMALLPOX EPIDEMIC OF 1780

Town	Married Males	Married Females	Widowers	Widows	Single Males	Single Females	Boys	Girls	Total No. of Dead	No. of dead Tributarios	Financial Assistance (in pesos)
Sacapulas	14	42	11	9	21	24	78	101	330	10	-
Cunén	16	20	7	1	3	2	12	16	77	10	-
Uspantán	11	22	5	2	22	3	10	11	86	22	-
Nebaj	6	11	-	-	19	15	58	56	165	7	-
Chajul	5	15	-	-	10	-	86	77	193	5	-
Cotzal	11	17	-	-	8	3	48	47	134	11	-
San Juan Ixcoy	5	9	-	1	21	24	35	39	154	6	-
Soloma	5	5	2	1	2	3	7	17	42	5	-
Santa Eulalia	19	37	3	3	31	28	84	92	297	17	-
San Mateo Ixtatán	10	26	20	6	32	10	55	72	231	12	-
San Sebastián Coatán	8	11	-	-	13	14	26	51	123	8	-
San Miguel Acatán	5	12	1	5	31	18	24	33	129	5	-
San Andrés Jacaltenango	1	8	-	-	8	5	19	13	49	1	-
San Marcos Jacaltenango	8	6	-	-	7	-	11	21	53	8	-
Purificación Jacaltenango	13	28	4	1	32	29	80	86	273	13	-
San Antonio Huista	10	1	-	-	1	6	3	11	32	6	-
Santa Ana Huista	8	10	-	2	11	7	11	4	53	7	-
Concepción	7	17	-	2	22	14	44	41	147	7	-
Petatán	9	-	2	1	1	-	4	-	17	9	-
San Martín Cuchumatán	-	1	-	-	1	3	10	9	24	-	-
Todos Santos Cuchumatán	1	8	-	1	12	10	36	38	106	-	20p.
Chalchitán and Aguacatán	5	10	-	-	18	12	49	43	137	5	10p.
Chiantla	6	8	-	2	13	7	20	7	63	5	-
Huehuetenango	5	6	1	1	15	17	20	15	80	6	25p.
San Lorenzo	4	7	-	-	2	2	11	11	37	4	12-1/2p.
San Sebastián Huehuetenango	6	16	-	2	43	43	74	68	252	6	50p.
Santa Isabel	2	3	1	-	12	16	11	11	56	3	5p.
San Juan Atitán	1	13	1	3	10	4	29	35	96	2	50p.
Santiago Chimaltenango	2	1	-	3	7	14	28	24	79	2	-
San Pedro Necta	3	8	1	-	11	5	26	13	67	3	20p.
Cuilco	1	2	-	1	7	7	23	14	55	3	-
Tectitán	5	6	-	1	12	8	30	13	75	4	-
Motozintla	-	3	-	2	3	3	7	12	30	1	-
Mazapa	1	1	-	3	10	4	4	19	42	3	-
Amatenango	2	2	4	-	3	4	9	12	36	2	-
Ixtahuacán	9	30	4	4	15	23	45	43	173	12	20p.
Colotenango	10	15	3	4	27	8	31	42	140	15	-
San Gaspar Ixchil	-	-	1	1	3	3	5	8	21	1	8p.
Santa Barbara	3	2	-	-	10	3	15	17	50	3	-
Malacatán	2	4	2	3	2	4	9	9	35	2	1-1/2p.
									4,209	259	

Source: AGCA, A1.44, legajo 6097, expediente 55507.

Note: All the above deaths occurred among the Indian population. In addition, there were 181 deaths among the Spanish and Ladino population of the region.

for 11 towns (see Table 15). The other 29 Cuchumatán towns, including those most affected by the epidemic, received no monetary help whatsoever, and had to fight the sickness with nothing other than their own limited resources.

By the end of 1781, the epidemic of smallpox appears to have abated. Another less fatal outbreak of the disease, however, flared up in 1795 and again in 1803. Although these renewed outbreaks were much more localised than the epidemic of 1780-1781, the Spanish authorities reacted with stronger emergency measures. Since many of the towns where smallpox reappeared were located on the camino real, this main artery between Guatemala and Chiapas was closed. A garita (control point) at the town of Huista ensured that commerce and trade was strictly monitored, since it was thought that the disease had entered the Cuchumatanes from Chiapas in the first place.[34] In an attempt to lessen mortality among the Indian population, the alcalde mayor introduced a province-wide campaign of innoculation. By 1807, over 3000 Indians, the majority under 14 years of age, had been vaccinated.[35] Despite resistance from an element of the native population and a lack of cooperation among Spanish residents,[36] the campaign of inoculation against smallpox seems to have been successful. After 1807, the practice of vaccination became firmly established throughout Spanish America, resulting in the gradual elimination of smallpox as a major killer of Indians.[37]

About 15 years after the smallpox epidemic of 1780-1781, many towns in the Cuchumatanes were struck by a devastating outbreak of typhus. A disease transmitted to humans via fleas and lice, typhus, like smallpox, was long recognised as a first rank exterminator of Indians. In 1796, the alcalde mayor of Huehuetenango, Francisco Xavier de Aguirre, informed the audiencia that, owing to the ravage of typhus, "many Indians in the town of Jacaltenango are dying".[38] Aguirre stated that the disease had already claimed the lives of over 500 Jacalteca Indians, among them 61 tributarios.[39]

From Jacaltenango, typhus spread quickly to the nearby town of Concepción where, between September 7, 1796 and September 27, 1797, no fewer than 561 Indians died from the fatal fever. Only 56 tributarios were left alive. In order to prevent the further spread of infection, over 100 homes in Concepción were burned. This, alas, was a futile action, because the disease soon appeared in Todos Santos where it killed 588 people, over half the town's population, among them 96 tributarios. The neighbouring town of San Martín was also affected. There, 87 Indians perished, leaving only 91 sickly survivors.[40]

By 1799, the epidemic of typhus had reached the Ixil country. Two hundred victims were buried in the churchyard at Chajul where the pestilence at its height carried off ten to 12 people each day. Nebaj was also badly hit. But perhaps the greatest loss of life occurred at the Mam town of San Sebastián Huehuetenango. Here, 1070 Indians were reported dead, 245 of whom were tributarios.[41]

The high incidence of death among the tribute paying element of the population forced the Spanish authorities to adjust downwards the assessment of most of the stricken towns. By the end of the eighteenth century the number of tributarios comprising the towns of Jacaltenango, San Martín, Todos Santos, Chajul, and Uspantán had been significantly reduced.[42] In the case of Concepción, Nebaj, and Petatán, the alcalde mayor even suggested that the Indians should be relieved temporarily of the burden of tribute payment, so considerable was the mortality in these three particular towns.[43]

At the turn of the century, there was a lull in the ravage of typhus. From 1799 to 1802 there are few documented occurrences of the disease. Then, in 1803, there was a dramatic reappearance of the pestilence in the towns of the parish of Soloma.

Over a period of about four years, from 1803 to 1807, the lives of the Indians in this remote and rugged part of the Cuchumatanes were plagued by the double spectre of disease and famine. Between June 6 and August 11, 1804, a total of 141 deaths due to typhus were reported at San Juan Ixcoy. For roughly the same length of time, a mere two months, 243 Indians died at Santa Eulalia and 167 Indians died at San Miguel Acatán, all as a result of contracting typhus. Exacerbating an already miserable predicament, there were outbreaks of measles and smallpox throughout Soloma, followed, that same year of 1804, by an invasion of locusts.[45] The plight of the Indians under such desperate circumstances is nowhere more tragically conveyed than in a letter addressed to the alcalde mayor of Huehuetenango by the Ladino comisionado of the parish of Soloma, Marcos Casteñeda:

> For four years now in the towns of [the parish] of Soloma there has been great distress owing to the high mortality caused by the epidemic of typhus which kills [the Indians] without relief or remedy, leaving them only in dire hardship. Through fear of death, we [the Ladino residents Marcos and Santiago Casteñeda] fled with our families to the solitude of the mountains and barren wastes of Chemal, suffering there the extremity of its climate, abandoning our houses and possessions in Soloma. But God having saw fit to end this terrible affliction, we are returning once again to our homes. To our horror we find that the majority of the Indians of Santa Eulalia have perished, and are lying unburied all over the place, their decaying corpses eaten by the animals which roam the countryside .... It is even more painful, however, to see the great number of orphaned children crying for the laps of their parents, asking for bread without having anyone to receive it from .... After so much hard work, these unfortunate Indians have been reduced to a life of misery. Having returned to their town [the Indians who survived] are without homes, without resources to pay their expenses and tribute, and without corn to feed themselves and their families. If no measures are taken to assist these wretched people, they will without doubt starve to death, because they did not plant corn in the places where they sought refuge [from the epidemic], and so they have nothing to live on, both for this year and for the next, since it is now too late to plant their crops. It is very common in this parish to find large numbers of Indians, old and young alike, walking from town to town, from

> house to house, begging and searching for food .... Señor Alcalde Mayor, inform the President that help should be extended to the towns of this parish of Soloma; at the very least [the Indians] of Santa Eulalia and San Miguel Acatán could be exempted from paying tribute for the years during which they have suffered great misfortunes.[46]

Casteñeda, in another communication, reckoned that the outbreak of typhus had killed "three-quarters of the Indian population of San Miguel Acatán and Santa Eulalia" and stated that most of the survivors of the epidemic were rendered "destitute and homeless because their houses were burned to rid them of the contagion".[47]

After receiving Casteñeda's reports, the *alcalde mayor* arranged for one male nurse, two female assistants, and six soldiers to be dispatched to Santa Eulalia in order to assist the afflicted Indians. Along with the relief force was sent a shipment of food and medicine, including four *arrobas* (c. 100 lbs.) of sugar, four *arrobas* of rice, half an *arroba* of flour, five pounds of mustard, a quantity of quinine powder, ammonia salt, and castor oil, and a length of cloth to be made into blankets.[48]

In response to a plea by the Indian *alcaldes* and *principales* of Santa Eulalia to exempt the town completely from paying tribute during the disruptive years of the typhus epidemic, the *alcalde mayor* was able only to obtain a royal order granting a temporary respite from the obligation.[49] The refusal of the Spanish authorities to grant the Indians of Santa Eulalia and San Miguel Acatán a total tribute exemption prompted the parish priest of Soloma, Fray Juan José Juarez, to write the following rebuke to the alcalde mayor:

> It strikes me that what is most important to you is that the Indians pay their tribute [so that] you receive your salary, but I think the Indians will be unable to pay, either this year or later, [because] they have lost their crops and consequently have nothing to pay with.[50]

The tone of this address imparts some sense of the numbed resignation with which servants of the Crown in outlying rural districts would respond, during times of crisis, to the apathy, ineptitude, and lack of responsibility of men in distant seats of authority. Apparently even during an epidemic involving considerable loss of life and appalling human suffering, an appropriate course of remedial action was beyond the workings of government bureaucracy.

It is now generally recognised that, by introducing Old World diseases to an immunologically defenseless native population, the Spanish conquest of America precipitated a demographic collapse that was probably the most catastrophic in the history of mankind. The magnitude and rapidity of Indian depopulation in the Cuchumatán highlands following conquest by Spain conforms to a pattern already well-established for a number of other long settled parts of Latin America.[51] A population of perhaps 260,000 on the eve of conquest, roughly the same size as the mid-twentieth century population of the Cuchumatanes, had by 1670 declined to around 16,000, a fall of slightly more than 90 per cent over a period of 150 years. The demographic recovery which began in the last quarter of the seventeenth century continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this time population increase was slow and sporadic because of the persistent outbreak of diseases to which the Indians only gradually acquired immunities. It was not until the third decade of the present century that population began to increase sharply, due chiefly to the impact of modern medical technology in substantially reducing rates of human mortality. By 1950, after a process of decline, recovery, and growth lasting over 400 years, the population of the Cuchumatán highlands reached a level equivalent to that which it may have numbered prior to the arrival of the Spaniards and their pestilential allies.

CHAPTER EIGHT: NOTES

[1] M.J. MacLeod, *Spanish Central America: A Socio-economic History, 1520-1720*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 374.

[2] MacLeod, *op. cit.*, pp. 130 and 224.

[3] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391.

[4] F.A. de Fuentes y Guzmán, *Recordación Florida*, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Tomo CCLIX, 1972), pp. 18-22 and 51-71. See also Chapter Three and Table 4.

[5] AGI:AG 128. Although at least 11 Cuchumatán towns may be identified in the Cerrato census, only nine have a record of how many *tributarios* they contained. The breakdown is as follows:

Name of Town	Number of Tributarios	Name of Encomendero
Ixtatán	65	Diego Sánchez Santiago
Jacaltenango	500	"Menor hijo de Gonzalo de Covalle"
Aguacatán	100	Juan de Celada
Chalchitán	60	Hernán Peréz Peñale and Alvaro de Pulgar
Soloma	40	Diego de Alvarado and Juan de Castrogui
Uspantán	-	Ignatio de Bobadilla and Santos Figueroa
Huehuetenango	500	Juan de Espinar
Sacapulas	160	Juan Paez and Cristóbal Salvatierra
Malacatán	80	Ignatio de Bobadilla
Motozintla	138	Hernán Gultierez de Cibaji Hernán Méndez de Sotomayor
Cuchumatán (Todos Santos)	-	"Menores hijos de Marcos Ruiz" and Garcia de Aguilar

A partial version of the Cerrato census may be found in published form in F. de Solano, *Los Mayas del Siglo XVIII: Pervivencia y Transformación de la Sociedad Indigena Guatemalteca durante la Administración Borbónica*, (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispanica, 1974), pp. 80-82.

[6] AGI:AG 966. A brief analysis of the Valverde census may be found in R.M. Carmack, *Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Sources*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 143.

[7] See Chapter Four for a full discussion of the computation of these population estimates.

[8] Carmack, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-140, and T.T. Veblen, "Native Population Decline in Totonicapán, Guatemala", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 1977, p. 495. Cerrato was strongly criticised by Bishop Marroquín for relying on tribute counts provided by *caciques*. This practice, together with the freeing of Indian slaves and the lowering of the amount of tribute required of each Indian *tributario*, made Cerrato extremely unpopular among the Spanish residents of Guatemala.

[9] Carmack, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

[10] AGI:AG 966. Valverde's assessment reads as follows: "The town of Huehuetenango, belonging to the *encomienda* of Francisco de la Fuente, resident of [the city] of Santiago de Guatemala, was formerly assessed ("estaba tasado") at 570 tribute payers, each one providing the *encomendero* with a woven blanket, a chicken, and one-half of a *fanega* (c. 58 lbs.) of corn". Between 1578 and 1582, Valverde lowered the number of tribute payers to 367. The amount of each individual tribute payment was also lowered.

[11] Veblen, *op. cit.*, p. 495.

[12] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391. The total number of *tributarios* in the Cuchumatanes was 4040-1/2. Huehuetenango was assessed at 156-1/2.

[13] MacLeod, *op. cit.*, p. 19; and Veblen, *op. cit.*, p. 496. *Gucumatz*, or *cocoliztli*, is an undetermined type of plague; MacLeod believes that the descriptions of the disease resemble the symptoms of pulmonary plague. *Matlazáhuatl* is a disease of disputed origin which some scholars believe to be typhus; cf. S.F. Cook, "The Incidence and Significance of Disease Among the Aztecs and Related Tribes", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, No. 26, 1946, p. 321, and P. Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 23.

[14] The fact that almost no demographic documentation exists for the period 1580 to 1664 may be due to any number of survival hazards, such as flood, fire, earthquake, theft, or negligence. The lack of documentation, however, may also be simply a reflection of how relatively neglected the Indian peoples of the Cuchumatanes were during the seventeenth century.

[15] The 1604 ecclesiastical census entitled Memoria de los frailes menores que hay en la provincia de Guatemala is housed in the Biblioteca del Real Palacio, Madrid. It appears in published form in Solano, op. cit., pp. 106-108.

[16] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 1601, exp. 26391.

[17] Fuentes y Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 15-18 and 22-44.

[18] W.M. Denevan (Ed.), The Native Population of the Americas in 1492, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), pp. 1-12. S.F. Cook and W. Borah, Essays in Population History: Mexico and California, Vol. Three, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), p. 102, summarise their decades of collaborative research on the historical demography of central Mexico in one succinct sentence: "We conclude, then, that the Indian population of central Mexico, under the impact of factors unleashed by the coming of the Europeans, fell by 1620-1625 to a low of approximately 3% of its size at the time that the Europeans first landed on the shore of Veracruz".

[19] Gibson, Spain in America, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 43-47 and 136-137. The same scholar, in his work, The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 403, offers the following reflection on the Leyenda Negra: "The Black Legend provides a gross but essentially accurate interpretation of relations between Spaniards and Indians. The legend builds upon the record of deliberate sadism. It flourishes in an atmosphere of indignation, which removes the issue from the category of objective understanding. It is insufficient in its awareness of the institutions of colonial history. But the substantive content of the Black Legend asserts that Indians were exploited by Spaniards, and in empirical fact they were".

[20] B. de las Casas (trans. J. Phillips), The Tears of the Indians: Being An Historical and True Account of the Cruel Massacres and Slaughters of Above Twenty Millions of Innocent People; Committed by the Spaniards in the Islands of Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, etc. As also in the Continent of Mexico, Peru, and Other Places of the West Indies, to the Total Destruction of These Countries, (London: 1656), pp. 43-53.

[21] A.W. Crosby, Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1972), pp. 35-58; Gerhard, *op. cit.*, p. 23; MacLeod, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20 and 38-40; and W.H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, (New York: Anchor and Doubleday Press, 1976), pp. 176-207.

[22] Crosby, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31; and R. Gruhn (personal communication).

[23] Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

[24] MacLeod, *op. cit.*, p. 20. Citing the French historian Pierre Chaunu, MacLeod states that "a population which amounted to about 20 per cent of mankind in 1490 was reduced to three per cent within a century" owing chiefly to the disease factor.

[25] Crosby, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-58, contains an account of the impact that the first pandemic of smallpox had on the native peoples of America.

[26] MacLeod, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-19. For a review of the effect of the Black Death on European society in the mid-fourteenth century see McNeill, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-175, and P. Ziegler, *The Black Death*, (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1976 Edition), especially pp. 232-259.

[27] T. de Motolinía (trans. F.B. Steck), *Motolinía's History of the Indians of New Spain*, (Washington: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1951), pp. 87-88.

[28] MacLeod, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 and 98.

[29] MacLeod, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

[30] A. Recinos and D. Goetz (translators), *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 115.

[31] T. Gage (Ed., J.E.S. Thompson), *Thomas Gage's Travels in the New World*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 263. In relation to the typhus pandemic of 1631, Gage makes the important observation that the disease, while devastating the Indian population of highland Guatemala, affected relatively few Spaniards. This is because typhus, like smallpox, measles, and most of the other diseases which decimated the Indians, had been endemic to the Old World. Consequently, after centuries of being exposed to such maladies, the Spaniards had developed a fairly high immunity to them. With the possible exception of syphilis and a number

of gastro-intestinal ailments, the New World had no endemic infections which had the same drastic effect on the Spaniards as Old World diseases had on the native Americans. Cf. Cook, *op*. *cit*., pp. 323-324 and Crosby, *op*. *cit*., pp. 122-160.

Regarding the unequal impact of disease exchange, McNeill, *op*. *cit*., p. 2 makes the following point:

> [It] is worth considering the psychological implications of a disease that killed only Indians and left Spaniards unharmed. Such partiality could only be explained supernaturally, and there could be no doubt about which side of the struggle enjoyed divine favor. The religions, priesthoods, and way of life built around the old Indian gods would not survive such a demonstration of the superior power of the God the Spaniards worshiped. Little wonder, then, that the Indians accepted Christianity and submitted to Spanish control so meekly. God had shown Himself on their side, and each new outbreak of infectious disease imported from Europe (and soon from Africa as well) renewed the lesson.

While perhaps oversimplifying somewhat the Indians' "acceptance" of Christianity and their "meek submission" to Spanish domination, McNeill presents a very plausible thesis. Such a fatalistic interpretation of the uneven incidence of disease in the minds of the Indians must have greatly facilitated the Spanish conquest of America.

[32] AGCA, A1.44, leg. 6112, exp. 56104, 56108.

[33] AGCA, A1.44, leg. 6097, exp. 55507.

[34] AGCA, A1.47, leg. 385, exp. 8012, and A1.4, leg. 6105, exp. 55836.

[35] AGCA, A1.47, leg. 2162, exp. 15558, and A1.47, leg. 385, exp. 8012. The inoculation, by 1807, of over 3,000 Indians in the Cuchumatán highlands is impressive. Edward Jenner first published his findings concerning vaccination against smallpox in 1798. Five years later, in 1803, Spain sent a medical mission to Mexico to inform local doctors of Jenner's successful experiments in establishing an immunity against the disease. The mission spent four years in the New World before departing for the Philippines. It thus took only nine years, in an era not noted for prompt exchanges of information, for the benefits of Jenner's research to reach the Indians of the Cuchumatanes. Cf. McNeill, *op*. *cit*., pp. 222-223.

[36] AGCA, A1.47, leg. 191, exp. 3905, and A1.47, leg. 2171, exp. 15674. The first document cited concerns a complaint made by a Spanish resident of Huehuetenango that the *alcalde mayor*, Prudencio de Cozar, intends to send him to prison for having neglected to arrange for the vaccination of a number of Indians.

[37] McNeill, *op*. *cit*., p. 223.

[38] AGCA, A1.24, leg. 6101, exp. 55666.

[39] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 255, exp. 5719.

[40] AGCA, A1.24, leg. 610, exp. 55666.

[41] AGCA, A1.49, leg. 192, exp. 3911.

[42] AGCA, A1.24, leg. 6102, exp. 55697; A3.1, leg. 2894, exp. 42846; A3.16, leg. 242, exp. 4814; and A3.16, leg. 244, exp. 4869.

[43] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 141, exp. 4811; A3.16, leg. 141, exp. 4811; and A3.16, leg. 242, exp. 4814.

[44] AGCA, A1.4, leg. 6107, exp. 55898, and A3.16, leg. 245, exp. 4909.

[45] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 245, exp. 4909.

[46] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 249, exp. 5036.

[47] AGCA, A1.14, leg. 386, exp. 8037.

[48] AGCA, A1.4, leg. 6108, exp. 56001.

[49] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 249, exp. 5036, and A1.14, leg. 386, exp. 8037. The formal request of the Indians to be exempted from paying tribute owing to the ravages of typhus reads as follows: "Señor Alcalde Mayor: We, the *alcaldes* and *principales* of the town of Santa Eulalia, implore you to look on us as your sons. All is lost in our town. There are some who are homeless and others without food, it now being years since the fields were attended to. Many are consequently without corn to eat and live by .... There are some who have not yet returned to their town and are [seeking refuge from the epidemic] in the [towns of the] coast, in Jacaltenango, and in Soloma .... Señor Alcalde, we are still frightened, because the people of the town

continue to die [of typhus]; before God this is the truth and no lie .... Help us, Señor Alcalde, by requesting of the President that he pardon us from paying tribute .... There is no corn at all in the town".

[50] AGCA, A3.16, leg. 2899, exp. 43049.

[51] A full bibliographical listing of studies of Indian depopulation in Spanish America is given in Chapter Four, note 4. The theme of Indian depopulation in Portuguese America constitutes much of John Hemming's book Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians, 1500-1700, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), especially pp. 487-501.

CONCLUSION

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act ...

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response ...

Falls the Shadow.

T.S. Eliot (from
The Hollow Men)

By the opening years of the sixteenth century, the Indian peoples of the Cuchumatán highlands had broken away, after two or three generations of subjugation, from the hegemony of the Quiché of Gumarcaah. Their newly won autonomy was alas short-lived. Between 1525 and 1530, native communities in the Cuchumatanes were confronted and defeated by an alien force far more formidable than anything they had come in contact with before: imperial Spain.

The Spanish conquest of the Cuchumatán highlands was not accomplished without prolonged and bloody conflict. Resistance to the European invaders was widespread, but was particularly marked among the Mam, the Ixil, and the Quichean people of Uspantán. By 1530, however, Indian opposition in most parts of the Cuchumatanes had been brutally crushed, and the region entered an era of Spanish domination which was to last almost 300 years.

Throughout the colonial period, prospects in other parts of Central America held a greater potential for the Spanish desire for wealth than did the Cuchumatán highlands. The slave trade in Nicaragua and Honduras; silver mining in the hills around Tegucigalpa; the cultivation of cacao in Soconusco, Suchitepéquez, Guazacapán, and Izalcos; cattle raising and the indigo dye industry in the tierra templada to the south and east of Santiago de Guatemala; all these activities, and others, were more attractive to materially-minded Spaniards than the limited entrepreneurial opportunities offered by involvement in the Altos Cuchumatanes, rugged, remote, and with few major exploitable resources. With the possible exception of supplying much needed Indian labour to the cacao plantations of the Pacific coast, the region therefore had little direct participation in the great economic booms which had such a dramatic and long-lasting impact elsewhere.[1] If, in terms of its status with the mother country, Central America was indeed "the richest of the poor, or the poorest of the rich relations",[2] then the Cuchumatán highlands must surely have ranked among the Spanish Crown's least prized possessions.

This is not to say that, because of the region's physical isolation and limited economic or entrepreneurial potential, the land and the people of the Cuchumatanes were untouched by nearly three centuries of Spanish rule. The colonial experience here was marked only by differences of degree, not of kind.

Like all native groups throughout highland Guatemala, the Indians of the Cuchumatanes in the middle years of the sixteenth century were either persuaded or forced into leaving their old homes in the mountains and taking up residence in new church-dominated congregaciónes. Established primarily with a view to converting the Indians to Christianity and to creating centralised pools of exploitable labour, the policy of congregación produced an orderly pattern of nucleated settlement which contrasted greatly with the predominantly random and scattered arrangement of pre-Hispanic times. Although the imprint of congregación persists to this day, the operation of the policy in the Cuchumatán highlands was not without its failures and frustrations. Particularly during the economically depressed years between 1635 and 1720, with Spanish authority in the region growing weak and less effective, many Indians abandoned congregaciones for outlying rural areas. The centrifugal movement away from the congregaciones was accompanied by a revival of pre-Christian Mayan religion, a development which was apparently just as distasteful to the Spanish authorities as the fact that the Indians once again practising "their ancient erroneous rites" were no longer contributing to the economic well-being of the colony.

A number of devices were introduced by the Spaniards to control and exploit the human resources of congregaciones, the most important of which were the encomienda, the tasación de tributos, and the repartimiento. Prominent and prestigious chiefly during the first century of colonial rule, encomienda was a means whereby a privileged individual was granted the right to enjoy the tribute, and originally also the labour, of a certain number of Indians in a town or group of towns. The amount of tribute owed by a town was stipulated by the tasación de tributos, which assessed tribute-paying according to the capacity of the town's inhabitants as measured principally in terms of age, sex, and marital status. Through the operation of repartimiento, labour was coerced from the Indians and channelled into a wide variety of menial and servile tasks.

Coming to the New World first and foremost as entrepreneurs who sought to profit from the work of others, the Spanish conquerors and colonists turned to the acquisition of land only after their search for gold, silver, or a successful cash crop--a produit moteur--proved fruitless.[3] Apart from a few early titles in the Huehuetenango area, the taking up of land on the part of Spaniards began significantly only during the seventeenth century depression, when a frugal self-sufficiency was not without advantage. This trend continued throughout the eighteenth century as Spaniards who acquired land in the Cuchumatanes, particularly on the lush meadows of the Altos de Chiantla, became aware of the potential of the region for the raising of livestock, especially sheep. Although sizeable haciendas were developed, precipitating conflict between Spaniards and Indians over land rights and boundaries, the emergence of the landed estate in the Cuchumatán region was not attained wholly at the expense of the territorial integrity of native communities. Some Indian towns, particularly in the south, may not always have had enough land to feed their populations and meet their tribute requirements, but they held on tenaciously to what little they had. Other Indian towns, especially those along the northern frontier bordering sparsely settled tropical lowlands, apparently never experienced a man-land crisis throughout the entire colonial period.

Under Spanish rule, the Indians of the Cuchumatanes were introduced not only to the conquerors' religion, language, and customs; they were also exposed, as were native groups elsewhere in the Americas, to an array of diseases inadvertently brought by the invaders from the Old World to the New. The effect of this transfer on the immunologically defenseless native population was devastating. Due to the ravages of epidemic disease, Indian numbers in the Cuchumatán highlands between 1520 and 1670 fell from possibly 260,000 to 16,000, a drop of over 90 per cent in a century and a half. Although population doubled by the end of the colonial era over its nadir level of 1670, demographic recovery was both sporadic and intermittent because the Indians only slowly acquired immunities to the contagions long endemic to the Spaniards. Epidemic disease was therefore a debilitating peril with which native communities constantly had to contend. Its impact on Indian life was profound. When disease broke out, it invariably precipitated a chain of events, including catastrophic mortality, the inability of stricken towns to pay tribute, and the failure on the part of the Indians to plant their fields for the year ahead. Famine, misery, and a wretched existence were then never very far away, and served only to increase the susceptibility of the Indians to renewed outbreaks of pestilence. With the recurrence of such unforeseen human tragedies, imperial expectations soon proved näive and unattainable. Perhaps more than any other single factor, it was the unleashing of Old World diseases on a physiologically vulnerable Indian population which caused a shadow to fall between the idea and the reality of Spanish colonial rule, not just in the Cuchumatán highlands of Guatemala but throughout the entire Hispanic American realm.

CONCLUSION: NOTES

[1] M.J. MacLeod, Spanish Central America: A Socio-economic History, 1520-1720, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 374-389.

[2] P. Chaunu and H. Chaunu, Séville et l'Atlantique, quoted in MacLeod, op. cit., p. xiv.

[3] MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 374-375.

GLOSSARY

Alcabala. A sales tax placed on certain goods and commodities.

Alcalde mayor. A Spanish official in charge of a district known as an *alcaldía mayor*.

Alcalde ordinario. A member of the municipal council of a Spanish town.

Alcaldía mayor. An administrative unit governed by an *alcalde mayor*.

Aldea. A village.

Almud. A unit of dry measure, one-twelfth of a *fanega*.

Amag. A dispersed form of settlement, the home of the common people in pre-Conquest times.

Arroba. A unit of measure of approximately 25 lbs.

Audiencia. Either the governing body of a region or, by extension, the region itself.

Ayuntamiento. A municipal council, or *cabildo*.

Caballería. A unit of land, roughly 105 acres (42 hectares).

Cabecera. The principal town of a *departamento* or *municipio*.

Cabildo. A municipal council, or *ayuntamiento*.

Cacique. An Indian chieftain or ruler.

Calpul. An Indian social and territorial unit comprised of several *chinamit*.

Camino Real. A "royal road", a highway.

Canícula. A dry spell which usually occurs mid-way through the rainy season in July or August.

Caserío. A hamlet.

Chinamit. A small, socio-territorial unit associated with certain native lineages.

Cofradía. A religious fraternity or sodality.

Comisionado. A constable, a keeper of the peace.

Composición de tierra. The legalisation of a title to land upon payment of a fee.

Congregación. The policy of concentrating scattered settlements into nucleated, church-dominated centres; by extension the centres themselves (*congregaciones*).

Conquistador. A Spanish conqueror.

Corregidor. A Spanish official in charge of a district known as a *corregimiento*.

Corregimiento. An administrative unit governed by a *corregidor*.

Costumbre. A traditional native ceremony, esoteric and generally strongly individualised.

Cuadrillero. A person, usually from the Guatemalan highlands, contracted to work on the coffee, cotton, and sugar cane plantations of the lowlands.

Cuerda. A measure of land, about 0.04 hectares.

Departamento. Department, an administrative division of the republic of Guatemala.

Ejido. An area of common land, generally forest or pasture.

Encomendero. Holder of an *encomienda*.

Encomienda. A grant of Indians, initially required to provide labour and tribute, later theoretically required to provide only tribute.

Entrada. A Spanish military expedition into unconquered territory.

Fanega. A unit of dry measure, about 1.5 bushels, approximately 116 lbs.

Finca. A large farm, usually a coffee plantation.

Finquero. An owner of a *finca*.

Ganado mayor. A term used to denote cattle, horses, and mules.

Ganado menor. A term used to denote sheep, goats, and pigs.

Gucumatz. An undetermined pestilence which may be pulmonary plague.

Hacendado. An owner of an *hacienda*.

Hacienda. An estate usually with a mixed economic base of agriculture and ranching.

Invierno. "Winter", the rainy season, which usually lasts from May to November.

Ladino. In Guatemala, a person whose cultural traits are predominantly non-Indian and who speaks Spanish rather than a native language.

Latifundio. Large agricultural estates.

League. A distance of about 2.6 miles (4.2 kilometres).

Licenciado. A judge or lawyer.

Manta. A piece of cloth, usually cotton; a common item of tribute.

Matlazáhuatl. A disputed kind of pestilence some consider to be typhus.

Milpa. Generally land used to grow corn, although it may contain other crops as well.

Minifundio. Small and fragmented agricultural holdings.

Minifundista. An owner of a *minifundio*, a peasant smallholder.

Municipio. A township, usually comprised of a *cabecera* and several *aldeas* and *caseríos*.

Páramo. A lofty altiplano or plateau surface upwards of 3000 metres in Guatemala.

Parcialidad. A small, social division associated with certain sections of a town or village.

Partido. A small administrative district.

Peso. A monetary unit worth two *tostones* or eight *reales*.

Peste. An unspecified epidemic.

Petate. A reed or palm mat.

Principal. A member of the Indian elite, a village elder.

Provincia.	A loose term for an administrative unit roughly as extensive as an *alcaldía mayor* or a *corregimiento*.
Real.	A Spanish coin eight of which, hence "pieces of eight", make one *peso*.
Reducción.	See *congregación*.
Región Andina.	Land over 300 metres in elevation.
Repartimiento.	A draft of forced native labour.
Sarampión.	Measles.
Siembra de invierno.	The rainy season planting.
Siembra de verano.	The dry season planting.
Tabardillo.	A fever usually considered to be typhus.
Tasación de tributos.	An assessment of the amount of tribute owed to the Crown or an *encomendero*.
Tierra caliente.	"Warm land" below 800 metres in elevation.
Tierra fría.	"Cold land" between 1500 and 3000 metres in elevation.
Tierras realengas.	Crown lands.
Tierra templada.	"Temperate land" between 800 and 1500 metres in elevation.
Tinamit.	Nucleated, religio-military strongholds, the home of the elite in pre-Conquest times.
Tostón.	Half a *peso* or four *reales*.
Tributario.	An Indian tribute payer.
Vecino.	A resident of a town, generally meaning a Spanish resident.
Verano.	"Summer". The dry season in Mediterranean Spain. Lasts from November until May in Guatemala.
Viruela.	Smallpox.
Xiquipil.	A measure of 8000 cacao beans.

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This dissertation is based on a familiarity gained over the past few years with both published and unpublished materials. Before simply listing a number of titles which may be considered fundamental research aids, it is perhaps useful to comment briefly on what sources proved most, or least, fruitful for the purposes of this study. Several suggestions regarding topics which demand future inquiry can also be made.

With respect to the published literature, mention has already been made in the Preface of the outstanding work of the Berkeley School and of Murdo MacLeod. To these contributions must be added Robert Carmack's Quichean Civilization, which is an excellent review of the major documentary sources relating to past and present day highland Guatemala. This bibliographical guide will likely serve students as a basic starting point for many years to come.

Until detailed archaeological and ethnohistorical investigations with an explicitly Cuchumatán focus are conducted, an understanding of the pre-Conquest experience of the region and its peoples must be tentatively derived, in large part, from an extrapolation of the work of Carmack and others in the Quichean area. It should be noted, however, that some scholars disagree with what they view as

Carmack's "literal interpretation" of the documentary sources, particularly the *Popol Vuh*, and point out that, contrary to the ethnohistorical account of Toltec invasion from the north, the archaeological record of the Quiché basin shows a strong continuity from Classic to Postclassic times (Gruhn, personal communication). The lack of sufficient anthropological work in the Cuchumatanes similarly involves speculating that the findings of fieldwork undertaken elsewhere in highland Guatemala, or even in parts of Mexico, apply also to Cuchumatán communities. There is a need, for example, for diachronic community studies which examine the relationship between contemporary Indian social units and landholding units in order to establish whether or not patrilineage groups localised in outlying hamlets have continued in association with certain landholdings since pre-Conquest times.

For the 300 year period of Spanish rule in Central America, Lesley Byrd Simpson's *Studies in the Administration of the Indians in New Spain* and the work of Howard Cline and Peter Gerhard are crucial to an understanding of *congregación* and the administration of empire. The recent volume by William Sherman (*Forced Native Labor*) fills a large gap in our awareness of how Spaniards controlled and exploited the Indian population in the sixteenth century. Before an accurate picture emerges of Indian and Spanish landholding in colonial Central America, regional studies similar to the ones undertaken by Charles Gibson and William Taylor for the Valley of Mexico and the Valley of

Oaxaca will have to be initiated. A forthcoming publication, with a dozen or so contributors presenting long-term population profiles at the local or regional level, will hopefully give the academic community a better idea of the historical demography of highland Guatemala. This particular issue was the subject of a special seminar at the twenty-seventh meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory held at Albany, New York, in October 1979.

Two of the great chroniclers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Antonio de Remesal and Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán, have left behind valuable data on the Cuchumatán highlands. Remesal's work contains exceptionally detailed information on the operation of _congregación_, and is one of the few sources that explicitly mention a decline in the size of the Indian population of the region due to the ravages of epidemic disease. The writings of Fuentes y Guzmán are marvelously rich, presumably because the chronicler served in 1672 and 1673 as _corregidor_ of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango, a charge which enabled him to become personally acquainted with the Cuchumatán terrain. Of the 27 chapters which comprise Book Eight of the _Recordación Florida_, 21 are devoted to a discussion of the history and geography of the Cuchumatanes. The account of Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz is the best eighteenth-century summary of the region, the original reports (AGI:AG 948) containing significantly more data than the published _resumenes_. The large documentary publications, such as the _Colección de documentos_ inéditos, relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas poseciones españolas de América y Oceanía (42 vols.: Madrid, 1864-1884) and the Colección ... de Ultramar (25 vols.: Madrid, 1885-1932), are rather disappointing. These volumes are probably most useful for projects of a scale larger and more complex than this study.

Unpublished documents covering the entire colonial period were consulted in the Archivo General de Centroamérica (AGCA) in Guatemala City and in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI) in Seville. The AGCA was used more heavily than the AGI because the existence of an unusual but functional catalogue in the former facilitates a more efficient extraction of data than the unwieldy organisation of the latter. In the AGCA, the ficheros (card indexes) of the following drawers brought the highest returns: Agricultura; Ayuntamiento; Epidemias; Esclavitud; Estadística; Encomienda; Fundación y Trasación de Poblaciones; Indigenas; Legislación; Minas; Patronato; Peticiones; Planos y Mapas; Provincia de Guatemala; Relaciones Geográficas; Tierras; Tasaciones; and Tributos. In the AGI work was mostly concentrated on sixteenth-century encomienda and tribute data, both of which are scarce commodities, for the Cuchumatán region at any rate, in the AGCA.

Although an attempt has been made to locate and scrutinise as many relevant materials as possible, no doubt a significant number were missed. When sources existing but unlocated at the time of writing become available in the future, it can only be hoped that they elucidate rather than obfuscate the content of this dissertation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Title to the encomienda of Sacapulas, granted by President Alonso López de Cerrato and judge Pedro Ramírez, of the Audiencia de Guatemala, to Cristóbal Salvatierra and the younger son of Juan Paez, 1549-1550.

En la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, a 5 dias del mes de abril de 1549. Por los señores Presidente y Oidores de la Audiencia y Cancilleria Real etc ... fue tasado la mitad del pueblo de Zacapulas que esta encomendado en Cristóbal Salvatierra vecino de esta dicha ciudad compañia del menor hijo de Juan Paez y es en los terminos y jurisdiccion de esta dicha ciudad mandose a los naturales del dicho pueblo que den en cada un año 9 docenas de gallinas de castilla y 4 hanegas de sal en cada un mes y 8 indios de servicio ordinarios en esta ciudad con que les den de comer el tiempo que estuvieren y les ensene la doctrina cristiana no han de dar otra cosa ni se les a de llebar a los dichos indios por ninguna via que sea ni comuten ninguna cosa de un tributo con otro sea las penas contenidas en las leyes y ordenanzas por su majestad hechas para la buena governacion de las indias. El licenciado Cerrato y el licenciado Pedro Ramírez.

En 4 dias del mes de junio del dicho año de 1549, ante los dichos señores Presidente y Oidores se agraviaron los indios del dicho pueblo de Zacapulas de esta tasacion que se les mando no diesen mas de cada 5 indios de servico y que no traigan la sal a esta ciudad. El licenciado Cerrato.

En la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, a 13 dias de enero de 1550 años, por los señores Presidente y Oidores de la dicha real Audiencia fue mandado a los naturales del dicho pueblo de Zacapulas, que por los indios de servicio que por esta tasacion habian de dar en cada un año den 14 xiquipiles de cacao la mitad por San Juan y la otra mitad por navidad y no han de dar los dichos indios de servicio.

Source: AGI:AG128.

APPENDIX 2

Title to the encomienda of Aguacatán, Nebaj, and Chajul, granted by Sebastián Alvárez Alfonso Rosica de Caldas, President of the Audiencia de Guatemala, to Francisco de Godoy, June 30, 1678.

En Guatemala, en 30 de junio de 1678 años, Don Sebastián Alvárez Alfonso Rosica, Presidente de esta Real Audiencia, dijo que por cuanto don Martin Carlos de Mencos Presidente que fue de esta Real Audencia en 11 de octubre de 1666, encomendo a don Francisco de Godoy Guzman vecino de esta ciudad los tributos de los pueblos de Aguacatán, Nebaj y Chahul del partido de Totonicapa, que bajaron por muerte de doña Ana de Guzman difunta, con cargo que diese en cada un año por via de pension 250 pesos, 150 a doña Maria, doña Francisca y doña Isavel Enrriquez de Castellanos hermanas, 50 a cada una, y los 100 restantes a doña Nicolasa de Fuentes doncella, y lo que liquidamente valian los tributos de los dichos 3 pueblos mando el senor Presidente que venidos los padrones y liquidose el valor de los tributos y sacadose la quinta parte que pertenece al derecho de armada de barlovento, gozase el dicho don Francisco de Godoy de 200 pesos, y de los demas se ajusten los 250 pesos, de pensiones ... y por la valia hecha de los tributos de los dichos pueblos no monta mas que 379 pesos 2 reales y sacados 75 pesos, 7 reales que importa el quinto, quedan 303 pesos, 3 reales y sacados 200 pesos pertenecientes al encomendero, quedan para las pensiones 103 pesos, 3 reales faltan para las pensiones 146 pesos, 5 reales; se mando que se tasasen los 103 pesos, 5 reales entre las pensiones.

Source: AGCA, A3.16, leg. 2808, exp. 40648.

APPENDIX 3

Title to the *encomienda* of Huehuetenango, granted by Juan Nuñez de Landecho, President of the Audiencia of Guatemala, to Luis Manuel Pimentel, December 24, 1562.

Yo el licenciado Juan Nuñez de Landecho, Presidente de la Real Audiencia por su real cedula encomendada a vos Luis Manuel Pimentel vecino de la ciudad de Guatemala, el pueblo de Huehuetenango, que es en los terminos y jurisdicion de esta ciudad con todos los caciques indios y principales del dicho pueblo con los barrios y estancias y todo lo demas a el anexo y perteneciente, segun que los tenia y poseia Juan de Espinar, vecino que fue de la dicha ciudad, difunto, por cuya muerte se os deposita y encomienda para que llebeis los tributos y aprovechamientos de los dichos indios conforme a la tasacion que de ellos estan hechas o se hicieren de aqui adelante con cargo que tengais de enseñar e instruir a los dichos indios en las cosas de nuestra santa fe catolica para lo cual se os encarga, para aumento de los dichos indios, y se os manda a los Alcaldes ordinarios de la ciudad os metan en la posesion de los dichos indios y amparen y defiendan en ella y no consientan de ella sea desposeido sin ser primero oido y vencido conforme a lo por su majestad mandado, la cual encomienda se os hace por la real cedula de su majestad su fecha a 28 de abril de 1561 años, fecha en la ciudad de Guatemala a 24 de diciembre de 1562 años. El licenciado Landecho.

Source: AGCA, A3.16, leg. 2798, exp. 40470.

APPENDIX 4

Title to two *caballerías* of land in the vicinity of Huehuetenango, awarded to Luis Manuel Pimentel for the purposes of growing wheat, November 24, 1563.

Yo el licenciado Juan Martínez Landecho gobernador general etc. ... por cuanto Luis Manuel Pimentel vecino de esta dicha ciudad de Guatemala, por peticion que ante mi presento mo hizo relacion diciendo que el tenia necesidad de tierras para sembrar trigo y por que en terminos del pueblo de Huehuetenango que el posee hay cantidad de ellas yermas y sin perjuicio de indios ni persona alguna me pidio le hiciese merced de 3 caballerias de tierra para trigo una legua del dicho pueblo de Huehuetenango poco mas o menos que hera donde tenia su sementera Juan de Espinar encomendero que solia ser del dicho pueblo y por mi visto cometi a Luis de Estrada vecino de la ciudad real de Chiapa que habia de ir y pasar por el dicho pueblo para que viese las dichas tierras y me informase si estaban sin perjuicio de algunos indios u de otras personas y el cual habiendolas visto me informa estar sin el dicho perjuicio y constandome de lo suso dicho por la dicha informacion y parecer que cerca de ello dio di la presente por la cual en nombre de su majestad etc. ...; doy y senalo a vos el dicho Luis Manuel Pimentel dos caballerias de tierra en la parte y lugar de suso declarado para que en ellas hagais vuestrase sementeras de trigo y sembrar y cultivar en ellas todo lo que quisieredes por bien tuvieredes y sea para vos y vustros heredros y sucedores etc. ... quisieredes y con tanto que dentro de 4 anos de la fecha de este titulo no las podais vender torcar a persona alguna ni iglecia ni monasterio so pena de perderlas y que dentro de 2 anos las sembreis y cultiveis y no haciendolo se podra dar a otra persona, y que las justicias de la ciudad de Guatemala os metan en la posecion y ampasen en ella so pena de 500 pesos de oro para la camara de su majestad, fecho en la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, a los 24 dias del mes de noviembre de 1563 anos, el licenciado Landecho, por mandado de su Sa. Diego de Robledo.

Source: AGCA, A3, leg. 2863, exp. 41698.

APPENDIX 5

Title to two *caballerías* of land in the vicinity of Chiantla, awarded to Luis Manuel Pimentel for the purposes of growing corn, November 26, 1563.

Yo el licenciado Juan Martínez de Landecho gobernador general y presidente de la Audiencia de Guatemala, etc. ... por cuanto Luis Manuel Pimentel vecino de la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, por peticion que ante mi presento me hizo relacion diciendo que en terminos del pueblo de Chiantla que poseia habian cantidad de tierras yermas y sin perjuicio de persona alguna y me pidio le hiciese merced de 3 caballerias de tierra para sembrar maiz y en un llano que estaba de la otra parte del rio que bajaba por bajo del dicho pueblo como ivan hacia la ciudad de Chiapa y por mi visto cometi a Luis de Estrada vecino de la ciudad real de chiapa que iva y pasaba por esos terminos me informase si estaban en perjuicio de algunos indios u de otra persona, el habiendo visto me informo que estaban sin perjuicio etc. y constandome lo suso dicho por la dicha informacion y parecer que cerca de ello dio di la presente por la cual en nombre de su majestad por el poder que me dio por su real cedula di y senale a vs el dicho Luis Manuel Pimentel dos caballerias de tierra en la parte y lugar de suso declarada para que en ellas podais hacer vuestras sementeras de maiz sembrar y cultibar en ellas todo lo que quisieredes y por bien tuvieredes y que se para vos y vustros sucesores y que no la podais vender trocar a ninguna persona iglecia ni monasterio so pena que la perdereis y que en dichas tierras no podais tener ganados mayores ni menores y que dentro de 2 anos la debeis tener cultivadas que dicho tiempo corre de la fecha de este titulo y no lo haciendo se daran a otra persona y que las dichas justicias de la ciudad de guatemala os metan en la posecion y amparen en dichas tierras so pena de 500 pesos de oro para la camara de su majestad etc. ... fecho en la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, a 26 dias del mes de noviembre de 1563 anos, el licenciado Landecho, por mandado de S.Sa. Diego de Robledo.

Source: AGCA, A3, leg. 2863, exp. 41698.

APPENDIX 6

Title to a ranch for sheep and goats in the vicinity of Huehuetenango, awarded to Luis Manuel Pimentel, November 26, 1563.

Yo el licenciado Juan Martínez Landecho gobernador general etc. ... por cuanto Luis Manuel Pimentel vecino de la ciudad de San Antonio de la provincia de Guatemala, por peticion que ante mi presento me hizo relacion diciendo que el tenia necesidad de un sitio para asentar una estancia de ovejas y cabras y por que en terminos de Huehuetenango que el poseia y unas vegas y llanos que so hacian por bajo del una legua poco mas o menos del dicho pueblo habia cantidad de tierras para el dicho efecto que estaban sin perjuicio de persona alguna me pidio le hiciese merced de un sitio para asentar la dicha estancia y por mi visto cometi a Luis de Estrada vecino de la ciudad real de Chiapa que venia de ir y pasar por ol dicho pueblo y sus terminos y para que viese el dicho sitio y tierras y me informase si estaban en perjuicio de algunos indios u de otra persona alguna el cual haviendo visto me informo estar sin el dicho perjuicio de indios y constandome lo suso dicho por la dicha informacion y parecer que cerca de ello dio el dicho Luis de Estrada di la presente por la cual en nombre de su majestad y por virtud del poder que a mi dado por su real cedula doy y senalo al dicho Luis Manuel Pimentel el dicho sitio para que en la parte y lugar de suso declarada pueda hacer y asentar una estancia de ovejas y cabras y sea para el y sus herederos y sucesores y hacer sus casas y corrales que convinien para ella y labrar y cultivar lo que le fuere necesario para su sustentacion y mantenimiento y dentro de una legua de la dicha estancia no se pueda asentar otro sitio de estancia ni hacar corrales y los pastos y abrebaderos sean comunes con tanto que la podais vender donar trocar a iglecia ni monasterio ni persona alguna so pena que la perdereis y que este la dicha tierra sin perjuicio de indios y que dentro de 1 ano la tengais poblada y dentro de otro siguiente de la fecha de data del titulo no la pobleis se podra dar a otra persona y que las justicias de la dicha ciudad de Guatemala os metan y amparen en la posesion de ella so pena de 500 pesos de oro para la camara, fecho en la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, a los 26 dias del mes de noviembre de 1563 anos, el licenciado Landecho, por mandado de S.Sa. Diego de Robledo.

Source: AGCA, A3, leg. 2863, exp. 41698.

APPENDIX 7

Title to a ranch for cattle, horses, and mules in the vicinity of Huehuetenango, awarded to Luis Manuel Pimentel, May 22, 1564.

Yo el licenciado Juan Martínez de Landecho gobernador general por su majestad de todas las provincia sujetas a la audiencia y cancilleria real de los confines y su presidente de ella etc. Por cuanto Luis Manuel Pimentel vecino de la ciudad de Santiago de la provincia de Guatemala, por peticion que ante mi presento me hizo relacion diciendo que tenia necesidad de una estancia de ganado mayor en terminos del pueblo de Huehuetenango legua y media del dicho pueblo donde el tenia hecha una cerca de unos sumideros de agua y me pidio le hiciese merced de las dichas tierras para el dicho efecto y por mi visto lo suso dicho atento que por ciertos autos y parecer de Alonso Paz a quien cometi viese las dichas tierras si estaban en perjuicio de persona alguna consto estar sin el dicho perjuicio di el presente por el cual en nombre de su majestad y del poder a mi dado por su real cedula doy y senalo al dicho Luis Manuel Pimentel las tierras y sitio que pide para la dicha estancia de ganado mayor en terminos del dicho pueblo de Huehuetenango y del de Chintem dos leguas y media del dicho pueblo a las espaldas de la sierra donde estan las minas donde el dicho Luis Manuel tiene hecha la dicha cerca de sumideros de agua y unas casas y corral para que en el pueda tener y tenga sus ganados mayores y menores que quisiere y por bien tubieres y sean para vos y vuestro herederos y sucesores y pueda hacer las casas y corrales que convengan para la dicha estancia y dentro de una legua della no se pueda asentar otro sitio de estancia ni hacer corrales y los pastos y abrebaderos sean comunes contando que no las pueda vender donar ni trocar a persona alguna ni iglecia ni monasterio dentro de 4 anos, que corran de la fecha de este titulo so pena de haber perdio, y con que el dicho sitio y estancia no esten en perjuicio de ningunos indios naturales ni persona alguna y dentro de 1 ano que corra del dicho dia y si despues de poblada estuviere otro ano despoblada la perdereis y se podra dar a otra persona etc. ... y que las dichas justicias de la ciudad de Santiago os metan en la posesion y amparen en ella sopena de ... etc. ... fecha en la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, a 22 del mes de mayo de 1564 anos. El lic. Landecho, por mandado de S.Sa. Diego de Robledo.

Source: AGCA, A3, leg. 2863, exp. 41698.

APPENDIX 8

Title to seven caballerías of land on the Altos de Chiantla, awarded to the Mercedarian monastery of Jacaltenango, January 21, 1708.

Don Felipe por la gracia de Dios Rey de Castilla, etc:- Por cuanto con comision del licenciado don Juan Geronimo Duardo, de mi consejo Oidor de la Audiencia corte y Real Cancilleria que reside en la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, y juez privativo del derecho de tierras a pedimiento del comvento y religiosos del pueblo de Jacaltenango, de la jurisdiccion del partido de Huehuetenango procedio el Alferez Tomas Garcia de Medina habiendo citado a los naturales del pueblo, de Chiantla a el capitan Juan Martinez de la Vega, a el Alferez Domingo Moscoso circunvecinos a medir y amojonar siete caballerias de tierra en los altos del pueblo de nuestra Señora de Chiantla, y conclusos los autos en la forma regular los remitio a dicho mu Oidor juez privativo ante quien se presentaron por parte de dicho comvento y religiosos y a su instancia declaro por realengas las referidas tierras y por verdadero valor de cada caballeria el de 7 tostones mandando se sacasen al pregon y rematasen en el mayor postor, y habiendose pregonado y celebrado remate a favor de dicho comvento en la misma cantidad de 7 tostones caballeria que con la media anata y cresido de castillos entero en mi real caja de la dicha mi corte de que dieron certificacion mis oficiales reales y por constar de ello le libro titulo el dicho mi Oidor juez privativo a los 17 del mes de enero corriente refrendado de mi infrascrito escribano de camara y mayor de gobierno y guerra, el cual se presento ante don Toribio de Cosio caballero del orden de Calatraba del dicho mi consejo Presidente de la referida mi Audiencia mi governador y capitan general en las provincias de su distrito con la peticion del tenor siguiente:- Fray Gonzales procurador general del comvento de nuestra senora de las mercedes de esta ciudad como mejor lugar haya paresco ante V.S. y digo que por el señor Oidor juez privativo del real derecho de tierras licenciado don Juan Geronimo Duardo se libro un titulo de 7 caballerias de tierra a favor del comvento y religiosos del pueblo de Jacaltenango en la jurisdiccion de Huehuetenango que es el que presento debidamente para que V.Sa. se sirva de mandarlo llebar a el senor fiscal, y con lo que dijere mandar se le libre a dicho comvento y religiosos mi parte, la confirmacion de el mediante lo cual a V.S. pido y suplico asi lo provea y mande que en ello espero recibir bien y merced, con justicia etc. Fray Jose Gonzales, procurador general.- Lo cual y el titulo demostrado se mando llebar a mi Fiscal, y el licenciado don Jose Gutierres de la Peña de mi consejo que lo es de la dicha Audiencia dio esta

APPENDIX 8 (cont'd.)

respuesta. El Fiscal de su majestad ha visto este escrito y dice que V.Sa. siendo servido podra librar a esta parte la certificacion que pide de el titulo, Guatemala, y enero 21 de 1708 años.- licenciado Gutierres.

Source: AGCA, A1.24, leg. 1577, folio 3.

APPENDIX 9

Title to twenty-seven caballerías of land awarded to the Indian community of San Andrés Cuilco, May 25, 1759.

Medida:

En San Andres Cuilco a 25 de mayo de 1759 años. Cojiendo desde la vega del dicho rio por dicho rio de el norte subiendo por un llanito de la falda de unas lomas y varias quebradas con 15 cuerdas 36 1/2 varas se llego a una cumbre de el cerro nombrado Viya, que enfrenta con el cerro del Rosario, etc. ... y bajando por la falda del dicho cerro Viya, por el mismo rumbo se llego al cerro Chinechahneva, y bajando por un riachuelo nombrado Quebah, y siguiendo por unas cumbres empinadas siniestra a mano el camino real que va al pueblo de Ystaguacan viene a este de Cuilco, y se llego al cerro nombrado Chinezyupin, y siguiendo por una quebrada se llego al pie del caminio de Chininxocoy, y dejando a la derecha el paraje nombrado Yxmuley en que tiene formado trapiche el padre fray Juan Antonio Gonzales, del horden de las Mercedes, quien sin justo ni legitimo titulo de dicho paraje, que dista 1-1/2 legua del dicho pueblo, y siguiendo la medida por unas lomas se llego al pie del cerro nombrado Pie de la Palma, y con 9 cuerdas de la quebrada nombrada Expocolvil, y siguiendo por el norte se llego al cerro que enfrenta al dicho pueblo y pasando por detras del cerro Exqueleaz, subiendo al cerro Tuisalcheo, y siguiendo con la cuerda se paro en una quebrada del riachuelo Yulba, y siguiendo en dicho rumbo por una savaneta se llego a enfrentar al pie del cerro nombrado Camcache, y se tomo por el poniente se llego al cerro Carchoz y siguiendo dicho rumbo se llego hasta el cerro Lavail, y por haber muchas barrancas y a ojo calcule 42 cuerdas hasta el cerro de Chansubeu por dicho rumbo del oriente, y asi quedo circumbalada dicha medida, y las tierras en que esta el dicho fray Juan Antonio Gonzales por no tener derecho alguno se le dejo a salvo para fraguar lo que convenga y no se dio la correspondiente legua del ejido que por la instruccion que por este juzgado previene por ser tierras fragosas e inutiles y siendo pocos sus naturales quedaron contentos con las que se le han medido que les son utiles para sus sementeras, que resultaron 27 caballerias.

Source: AGCA, A1, leg. 6006, exp. 52897.

APPENDIX 10

Title to fourteen *caballerías* of land at Sahpocolah, awarded to the Indian leaders of Aguacatán, Don Pedro y Don Sebastián de Escobar, August 21, 1711.

Don Felipe por la gracia de Dios Rey de Castilla. etc. Por cuanto a pedimento de don Pedro y don Sebastian de Escobar, indios naturales y principales del pueblo de Aguacatan en el partido de Huehuetenango, se midieron y amojonaron 14 caballerias de tierra en terminos de dicho pueblo y en el paraje nombrado Sahpocolax, cuyos autos de medidas se presentaron ante mi Oidor juez privativo de tierras licenciado don Manuel de Valtodano de mi consejo, pidiendo se declarase el verdadero valor de dichas tierras y por decreto que proveyo las declaro por realengas y por el justo precio de cada caballeria el de 8 tostones con el cual mando sacarlas al pregon para que se rematasen en quien mas por ellas diese y haviendose pregonado se remataron en los dichos don Pedro y don Sebastian de Escobar, a los 28 de agosto corriente de este ano a dicho precio y compliendo con el tenor del remate por parte del suso dicho se entero en mi real caja de la dicha mi corte 117 tostones 2 rs. y 14 maravedis, del valor de dichas tierras su media anata y acrecida que consta por certificacion de mis oficiales reales de ella, que originales para con los autos de esta materia en poder de mi infrascrito escribano de camara, mediante lo cual el dicho mi Oidor juez privativo de tierras les despacho titulo en forma a los 21 de dicho mes de agosto de este año con el cual se presento Zeledon de Berreon do su procurador ante don Toribio de Cosio etc ... Presidente de mi Audiencia, corte y Cancilleria Real que esta y reside en la ciudad de Santiago de las Provincias de Guatemala, mi gob. y cap. gral. en su distrito pidiendo la confirmacion de dicho titulo, y con lo que dijo mi Fiscal, de dicha mi Audiencia a quien le mando dar vista confirio a los dichos don Pedro y don Sebastian de Escobar, la confirmacion del titulo, y para que lo proveido tenga cumplido efecto con acuerdo de dicho mi presidente Gob. y Cap. gral. libro el presente por el cual apruevo y confirmo el referido titulo de 14 caballerias de tierra librado a favor de los dichos don Pedro y don Sebastian de Escobar por el dicho mi Oidor juez privativo que es el que va citado el cual mando se guarde cumpla y ejecute segun y como en el se contiene expresa y declara observandose su tenor y forma sin que se consienta poner ni que se ponga por ningunos mis jueces ni justicias ni otras personas embarazo ni impedimento alguno ni que los suso dichos sean inquietados en la posecion de dichas tierras

APPENDIX 10 (cont'd.)

antes si gocen en propiedad de ellas sin que se haga en contrario con ningun pretexto so pena de mi merced, y de 200 pesos de oro para mi camara y fisco, fecho en la ciudad de Guatemala, en 21 de agosto de 1711 años.- Don Toribio de Cosio - y yo Pidro de Espinosa escribano del rey ntro. Sr. y de cama en su Audiencia y Rl. Cancilleria que en sta. ciudad de Guatemala, reside, mayor de Gobierno y guerra, en su distrito la hice escribir por su mandado con acuerdo de su presidente gob.y cap. gral. - Registrado. don Manuel de Farinas. Conciller don Manuel de Farinas.

Source: AGCA, A1.24, leg. 1578, folio 271.